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THE  
TRAVANCORE  
TRIBES AND CASTES

VOLUME III

THE ABORIGINES OF TRAVANCORE

BY

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*Officer in charge of Ethnographic Survey*

with a Foreword by

The Hon'ble C. P. SKRINE, O. B. E., I. C. S.,

*Resident, Punjab States*

and an Introduction by

R. R. MARETT, M. A., D. Sc., D. Litt., LL. D., F. B. A.,

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Trivandrum:

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1941



DEDICATED

TO

SACHIVOTTAMA

SIR C. P. RAMASWAMI AIYAR,

K. C. S. I., K. C. I. E., LL. D.,

DEWAN OF TRAVANCORE

AS A TOKEN OF

GRATITUDE AND ESTEEM



## P R E F A C E

The author has been privileged, during a period of over a quarter of a century's service in the Forest Administration of Travancore, to enjoy unusual opportunities of meeting the jungle tribes of the State. From his very first contacts with them they aroused in him a deep and abiding interest and a desire to know more and more of their social life and problems. The inner life of the jungle reveals itself to those who linger lovingly amidst its shadows; and the author's sojournings among the tribes led him to study their customs, manners and social institutions.

Travancore is unique in that it includes among its population some of the most primitive tribes of the peninsula, tribes in some cases less changed perhaps by external influences than those of any other part of India. The purpose of the first two volumes of the Travancore Tribes and Castes was to set out the factual material gathered during prolonged residence and research among the tribes. The primary object was to present as true a picture as possible of the jungle tribes, a life apparently simple to the casual observer, but reflecting in essentials all the fundamental problems facing, though not solved by, so called civilized man, such as those of food-production, family, social, moral and religious life.



The task of the social investigator here is not always easy; he has to resist the temptation to record facts which might appear to him at the time more important and to overlook those which might not do so. Westermarck, referring to his experience in his enquiries on the science of human society, says how "a fact which at first may have seemed a trifle not worthy of attention, has later shed the most unexpected light over the origin of the development of some important institution." The author's first two volumes have attempted to present in a systematic manner the data collected through personal investigations and intensive studies for over a decade. He has endeavoured to present an unvarnished account of the life and institutions of the jungle tribes in a scientific temper which insists on accuracy of statement and fidelity to facts.

The real meaning and significance of factual data can be understood only when they are correlated to, and interpreted in the light of, known facts. The accounts of the jungle tribes cannot be complete without some knowledge as to their parent stock and racial origins, their collateral branches and distribution. This part of the story is one of theoretical reconstruction which calls for speculation and interpretation. Scholars like Keane, Haddon, Hutton and Eickstedt have made notable contributions in this direction. The present volume 'THE ABORIGINES OF TRAVANCORE' contains the conclusions of the author on the study of the tribes to which Blood-grouping studies have

yielded additional evidence. It attempts an interpretative glimpse of the inner life of the tribes who have now come under civilizing influences. It gives an exposition of primitive culture in all its aspects; a study whose importance has not received adequate recognition. In the opening address with which Westermarck, as Vice-Chancellor, prefaced the work of the Abo Academy, he said, "Not so long ago there was a generally current idea that the manners and customs of savage tribes could at most only be of interest as curiosities, and their study was scarcely looked upon as a science. And yet what an extraordinarily useful influence this study has exercised in the last few decades on the history of law, the science of religion, moral psychology, and sociology in general! It has, amongst other things, taught us to what a large extent civilized man still preserves the customs and ideas of savages in his institutions, in entire ignorance that he is so doing; for a nation's customs are like balls that seem to roll by their own impetus on through the centuries, and often it is only the study of primitive races that can give us a notion of the push that set the ball in motion."\* The author therefore feels grateful that he has been enabled to present a true and complete picture of the primitive culture of the State for posterity, for foreign influences are, according to Dr. Marett, obliterating the old landmarks like a rising tide; and unless these are charted at once, mere guesswork must alone serve to recall them. "There is every

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\* Westermarck, *Memories of My Life*, pp. 279-280.

reason why human nature should be known to everybody; and the wise State will see to it that it is known—Ignorance must go, especially ignorance of that which is now known about life which must be known to live soundly and sanely.”\* “Every people, every tribe, however little advanced in its stage of development, represents a certain psychic type or pattern. The interests of humanity require that every type should be assisted and educated to its adequate expression and development. No race lives to itself and no race dies to itself.”†

This book is of necessity brief. The danger of brevity is seeming dogmatism; but the author has avoided the dogmatic spirit and discussed the problems without bias or passion. He cannot be sufficiently grateful to the Government of His Highness the Maharaja Sri Chitra Thirunal for the stimulus given to anthropological research; nor can he adequately express his indebtedness to Dr. Sachivottama Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar for his personal interest and encouragement for giving a new reorientation to his work. The publication puts a coping stone on the study of the tribes.

The author takes this opportunity of expressing his deep gratitude to the Hon'ble C. P. Skrine, formerly Resident in Travancore, for his appreciative Foreword, and to Dr. R. R. Marett, Rector of Exeter College, Oxford, for his valuable Introduction. To Dr. J. H. Cousins he is very thankful for

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\* Dorsey, G. A., *The Nature of Man*, p. 102.

† Radhakrishnan, S., *The Hindu View of Life*, p. 95.

going through the typescript. His courtesy and helpfulness have been among the amenities of the labours of the author. He is much indebted to Mr. M. K. Nilakanta Aiyar, Chief Secretary to Government, for help received in the various stages of the publication. He is also under obligations to Rao Bahadur T. V. Venkateswara Ayyar for going through a portion of the letterpress of the volume.

Lastly, his thanks are due to Mr. P. E. Mathew, Superintendent, Government Press, and his staff for the neat printing of the volume.

Karamanai, Trivandrum,  
21st October 1940.

L. A. KRISHNA IYER.



# FOREWORD

BY

THE HON'BLE C. P. SKRINE, O. B. E., I. C. S.,

RESIDENT, PUNJAB STATES



## FOREWORD

Travancore is to be congratulated on setting an example to the States of India in furthering the cause of pure science. Anthropological and ethnological research, though useful to the administration, is of little direct economic value to a State. But in assessing the culture of a people it is the imponderables that count; and the maintenance of a well equipped Ethnological Survey by the Government of His Highness Sir Bala Rama Varma is one of many outward and visible signs of Travancore's inward and spiritual enlightenment.

No better choice than Mr. L. A. Krishna Iyer, son of that distinguished anthropologist Dewan Bahadur Dr. L. K. Ananthakrishna Iyer, could have been made for the direction of Travancore's ethnological survey. His industry is monumental, his activity in the field unflagging, his style scholarly and lucid. In this volume Mr. Iyer discusses the conclusions to be drawn from the mass of material set forth in his two volumes on "The Travancore Tribes and Castes" already published. It is not for a mere layman to comment on the theoretical results of Mr. Iyer's



labours ; but I shall be surprised if informed criticism does not place "The Aborigines of Travancore" in the front rank of India's contributions to that science which deals with mankind's proper study-man himself.

Lahore,  
2nd February 1940.

C. P. SKRINE.

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# INTRODUCTION

BY

R. R. MARETT, M. A., D. SC., D. LITT., LL. D., F. B. A.,

RECTOR, EXETER COLLEGE, OXFORD.



## INTRODUCTION

---

If Indians are to enjoy their heritage of culture, they must first take the pains to understand it. No doubt they are emotionally in touch with its underlying principles, and in that respect start with a great advantage over the European scholar. But the intellectual approach to an appreciation of its meaning calls not only for enthusiasm but for method. If science is to take the place of mere mythology, the historical facts must be critically mastered, and interpretation must conform with the rules of evidence. It is just because it is so hard to be honest about oneself and one's own affairs that autobiography is not always to be trusted; and yet it is obvious that, if he could and would bear impartial witness to the truth about his own life-history, no one else is in a position to compete with the individual himself in respect to that most illuminating form of knowledge which we know as insight. Just so India needs, and can by due preparation achieve, insight into its own ethnic individuality, so that its future self-development may be led to afford full expression to the native genius.

This does not mean that India must isolate herself from foreign influences, like some ascetic who turns his back on the world. The greatest



nations are those which have borrowed most. But to borrow fruitfully a people must assimilate. In other words, its force of inborn character must be such that, in taking over fresh ideas and customs, it does so selectively and in strict accordance with its natural bent. What we call race is a potentiality involving a destiny that may turn out to be happy or unhappy according as a right or a wrong education conditions the ripening process. India, then, must educate herself on broader lines if she is to prove her aptitude for the highest civilization and her capacity to make her own specific contribution thereto. Already her best minds are agreed that she can afford to be less conservative and more constructive—or reconstructive—in her effort to do her best for herself and for the world.

India is a land of sharp contrasts—geographical, somatological, cultural. Truly, it takes all sorts to make a sub-continent. Such diversity is all to the good if it be subordinated to a unity consisting not merely in a political but in a spiritual bond. India indeed has always had due regard for the things of the spirit, and ought therefore to be able to draw on her inner resources for the requisite ideal that can draw the inhabitants of India together and make them one in heart. How this is to be brought about it is hardly for me to suggest. Clearly, for one thing, the illiteracy of the masses must be overcome. My personal experience, however, has been entirely confined to the student class, or rather to its picked representatives who find their way to Oxford and there make excellent use of their talents. Now I have been frequently

struck in talking with these able young men about India how little they know about their own country and its inhabitants, apart from their own home-quarters and home-circle. But thus to conceive universal India in domestic terms is to abandon all attempt to comprehend it. The science of forestry cannot be contained in a flower-pot.

That this stay-at-home attitude of mind is morally no less than intellectually cramping I have no doubt. Indeed, I would go so far as to say that it is a sign of spiritual backwardness to shun alien contacts, implying as it does a lack of the self-confidence needed in order to meet and overcome the unknown. The vision of a larger India, in which mutual suspicion has been replaced by a free companionship in the pursuit of a common good, demands above all else a certain spaciousness of outlook. If the campaign is to begin auspiciously, the imagination must first be fired; and, to bring this about, the study of anthropology can do much, seeing that its scope is as comprehensive as that of all the humanities taken together.

For what a spectacle is provided of the progress of mankind, from the hunting stage upwards, by India, living India, containing here and now types of culture known to Europe only as archæological ghosts. Indeed, the present work, with its wealth of accurate observation, is chiefly concerned with such humble folk, still dependent on the more or less untamed jungle for their sparse subsistence, and attached to the higher civilization only in so far as it provides them with a few luxuries—for

example, lucifer matches as a substitute for the primeval fire-stick. "And of what use are these people?" someone may be inclined to say. I deprecate such a question, because it might be turned on the questioner—on oneself, in fact. At any rate it makes for charity to regard every human being as an end in himself. Nay, climatically India is capable of mothering a more miscellaneous brood than hungrier and less diversified lands can ever hope to do; so that an Indian ought to learn to rejoice in the sheer diversity of the population for which an all-embracing civilization must in the fulness of time be worked out, so as to preserve all that is most characteristic of the true India.

For the moment, however, all that I venture to commend to the braver spirits taming the young men of India is that they should pay more attention to the study of their own country, employing scientific methods so as to extend their historical survey to its widest limits. For this breadth of outlook is what anthropology tries to achieve. Human history is not especially concerned with the civilized man. All of us alike are anthropological specimens; nor is the title of *Homo sapiens* reserved for those who can sport university degrees. The so-called savage—the "man of the woods," as the word literally means—is likewise a fellow-creature, with a mental constitution much the same as ours in all essentials. Here, then, is the opportunity for a moral experiment. Can you, with the aid of scientific imagination, put yourself in his

place? So far as you can, sympathy is bound to ensue; and not only in India but throughout the world sympathy, as also the charity which is its practical expression, is the mark of the man as he emerges from the beast.

*Exeter College,  
Oxford.*

R. R. MARETT.







A View of Urali Hamlet showing their cultivation.

# THE ABORIGINES OF TRAVANCORE

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Travancore forms the south-westernmost part of the Deccan and bears the impact of all the racial migrations in the Deccan. It is bounded by the Western Ghats on the east and the Arabian sea on the west. Its total length from north to south is 174 miles, and its width from east to west is 75 miles in the northern boundary and 30 miles at the southern extremity. It has an area of 7,625 square miles. It presents a remarkable diversity of physical conditions and may be broadly divided into three distinct belts, each having its own characteristic soil, rainfall, vegetation, and cultivation. These are the Highlands, the Midlands, and the Lowlands. The Highland division contains a long range of mountains with fertile fields at the foot covered mostly with thick evergreen forests. Most of the reserved forests are in this division, and the portions let out for cultivation are covered with rubber, tea, and cardamoms. The rainfall ranges from 100 inches annually in the south to more than 200 inches in the north. This region is most sparsely populated. The Midland division is higher in elevation than the Lowland. The soil is fertile and the rainfall varies from 55 to 140 inches per annum. The Lowland region has a rainfall varying from 35 inches in the south to 110 inches in the north.

G.P.T. LINO. 105. 250. 15-10-1115.



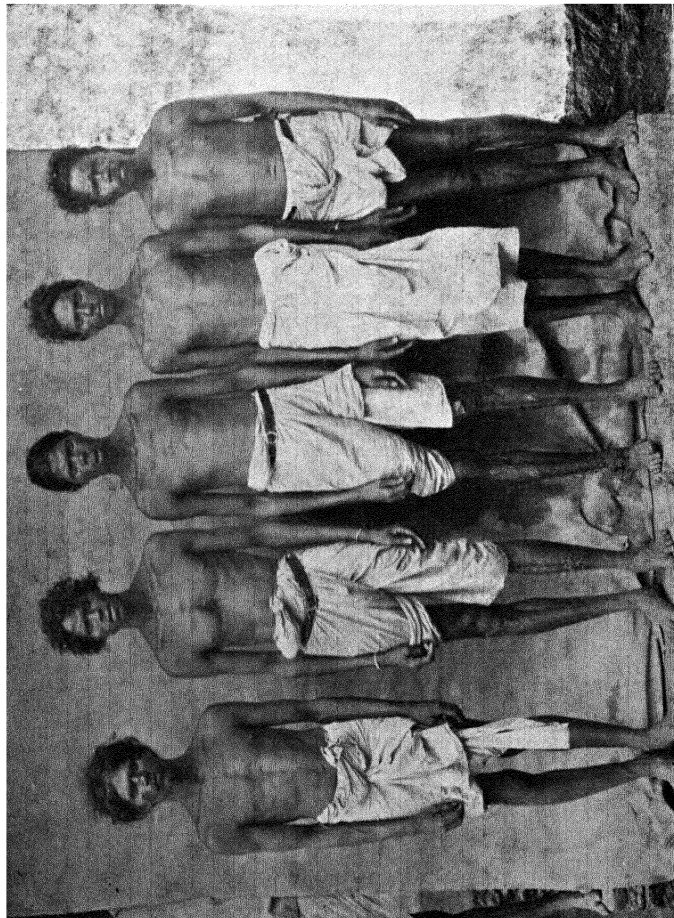
Practically, the whole area has been brought under cultivation.

*Geographical Distribution of the Primitive Tribes.*

The Highland region forms the home of the undernoted tribes:—

1. Kānikkār in the forests of Vilavancode, Neyyattinkara, Nedumangad, Pathanapuram, Shencotta, and Kottarakara Taluqs.
2. The Malapantārams scattered in the higher reaches of the Pamba and Achencoil rivers, and at Thalapara and Kannupalli of the Shencotta Taluq.
3. The Malavētans who are found both in the Midland and the Highland divisions in the taluqs of Pathanamthitta, Pathanapuram, Nedumangad, Chirayinkil, and Neyyattinkara.
4. The Malankuravans who are found in the various parts of the State in the Highland and Midland divisions.
5. The Ūrālis in the Pirmede and Thodupuzha taluqs.
6. The Paliyans in the Pirmede taluq.
7. The Mannāns on the Cardamom Hills to the south of the Panniyar river in the Pirmede and Devikulam taluqs.
8. The Muthuvans on the Kannan Devan and Cardamom Hills in the High Range Division.
9. The Malapulayas in Anjanad of Devikulam taluq.





A Malapulaya Male group to show high stature.

---

10. The Vishavans in the Idyara valley of North Travancore.

The Midland region forms the home of the undernoted tribes:—

1. The Malayarayangans in the Rāni Reserved forest of Changanasery taluq, and Minachil, and Thodupuzha taluqs.
2. The Ullātans in the Rāni Reserved forests in the Highland region and in various parts of the Midland region.
3. The Paraya found in the Thovala, Agastiswaram, Iraniel, Kunnathur, and Kunnathunad taluqs and on the Cardamom Hills.
4. The Pulayas in all the taluqs to the north of Nanjanad.
5. The Nāyādis in the Karunagapalli taluq and in North Travancore.

In the Lowland region, the Thantapulayas and other subdivisions of the Pulayas are found.

*Population*

The primitive tribes were returned in the census of 1931 as 1,28,838 of whom 1,15,151 were Hindus, 10,780 Christians, and 2,907 belonging to tribal religions. Inclusive of the Parayas and the Pulayas, 3,93,172 were Hindu, 2,40,273 Christian, and 2,907 belonged to tribal religion. A comparison of the figures at different censuses demonstrates a process of rapid Hinduization taking place among these primitive tribes. The number of animists returned in 1901 was 28,193. This went down to 15,773 in 1911, to 12,637 in 1921, and to 2,097 in 1931.

The inference drawn from these figures is that the animists are being depleted and that the numbers they lose go over chiefly to Hinduism, and to a small extent to Christianity. "The opening of a large number of estates in forest regions has provided facilities for their coming in contact with the people of the plains. Some of the tribes are coming down to the plains to earn their livelihood. In this way as well as by the penetration of civilized man in the forests, the primitive tribes are being brought under the influence of the Hindus and the Christian missionaries."\* A statement of their population as they stood in 1931 is given in Table I.

TABLE I.

No.	Name of Tribe.	Hindus.	Christians	Tribal Religion.	Total.
1	Kanikkaran .	4,565	53	2,041	6,659
2	Kuravan .	87,071	8,158	66	95,295
3	Malankuti (Vishavan) .	166	...	...	166
4	Malapantaram .	100	...	87	187
5	Malapulayan .	254	...	...	254
6	Mala-Ūrali .	846	...	70	916
7	Malayarayan .	2,807	255	120	3,182
8	Mannan .	1,215	...	61	1,276
9	Muthuvan .	1,238	...	63	1,301
10	Nāyādi .	144	...	...	144
11	Paliyan .	379	23	81	483
12	Paraya (Sambavar) .	70,684	71,680	...	142,364
13	Pulaya .	2,07,387	1,57,813	...	365,150
	Thantapulaya .	795	...	...	795
14	Ullātan .	4,824	220	77	5,121
	Vetan .	9,496	2,000	241	11,737
15	Malavetan Vettuvan .	1,251	...	71	1,322

\* N. Kunjan Pillai, The Travancore Census Report, 1931, Part 1, p. 387.

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*Effect of Geographical Environment*

The geographical conditions of Travancore are such that the primitive tribes have had to live in regions of plenty today and poverty tomorrow. "Not because they originated here, but they were driven here by past climatic changes and migrations, remained here and stagnated here."\* Of all the tribes, the Malapantārams, the Muthuvans, and the Ūrālis have been least affected by outside influences. The remaining tribes have been subject to extraneous influences, and have therefore received an infusion of foreign blood and new ideas from the more civilized people with whom they have come into contact. This is clearly seen in the Vishavan, the Ullātan, the Paliyan, the Malayarayan, the Mannān and the Kānikkāran. Owing to the admixture of foreign blood, these tribes are now approaching the composite type of civilized humanity.

Climate determines the crop that man can grow in a locality. The Mannān, the Muthuvan, the Paliyan, and the Malapulaya who live at an altitude of 2,000 to 5,000 feet cultivate ragi; while the Kānikkāran, the Malayarayan, the Ullātan, the Vishavan, and others who live on lower elevations cultivate paddy and tapioca. Where climate favours the growth of forests, it prolongs the hunter stage of development and retards the advance to agriculture. The Malapantāram is the only tribe in Travancore still in the hunter stage.

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\* Giffith Taylor -- Race and Environment. p. 178.

The salubrity of high altitudes is favourable to human development. This is exemplified in the Muthuvans, the Mannāns, the Paliyans, the Ūrālis, the Malapulayas, and the Malapantārams. Their well-developed lungs, massive chests, and large torsos are due to the influence of the rarefied air at the high altitude at which they live. The average chest girth of the primitive tribes is given in Table II. Those on high altitudes evince, however,

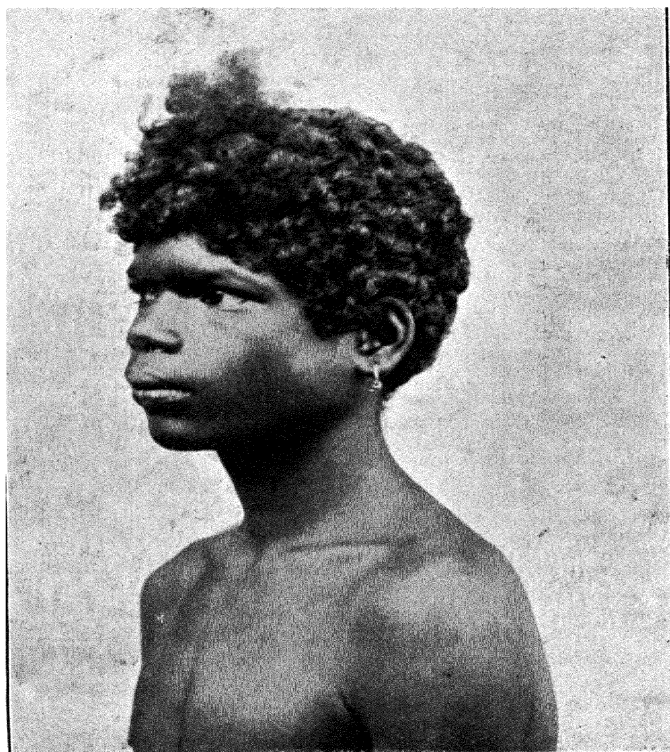
TABLE II.

No.	Name of Tribe	Average circumference of chest in Cms.
1	Kanikkaran	74·8
2	Malankuti (Vishavan)	77·2
3	Malapantaram	77·6
4	Malapulayan	78·9
5	Mala-Urali	75·5
6	Malayarayan	77·3
7	Mannan	75·8
8	Muthuvan	77·1
9	Nayadi	75·5
10	Paliyan	75·0
11	Paraya (Sambavar)	78·2
12	Pulaya	75·5
13	Thantapulaya	76·8
14	Ullatan	73·8
15	Malavetan	74·0
16	Malankuravan	73·8

an aversion to muscular effort. “As atmospheric pressure diminishes perceptibly at high altitudes, atmospheric oxygen combines with blood corpuscles in the lungs more slowly. According to trustworthy observations, sluggishness and dislike of







Urali Male (curly hair)



Urali Female, Front and Profile.



prolonged effort, muscular or otherwise, is the consequence of the slowing down of the blood.”\* The alleged backwardness of dwellers in tropical countries is said to be due to excessive heat. “The actinic rays of the sun are believed to stimulate the cells to greater activity when they fall on the human body. At first it is beneficial. If it goes on to excess, the cells apparently break down.”† Intense heat of long duration, combined with a high degree of humidity, is unfavourable to human development. It brings about enervation and increases a craving for stimulants which induces habits of alcoholism. The Kānikkār, the Ullātan, the Vishavan, and the Malavētan are marked examples of devitalization caused by tropical climate. Further, malaria is a disease of tropical and sub-tropical countries, whose climate is characterised by alternate wet and dry seasons. A people devitalised by this disease cannot be expected to be energetic and active. The sluggishness of the Kānikkāran, the Vishavan, and the Ullātan who live in malaria-stricken areas is due to the baneful effect of this disease.

### *Anthropometric Work in India*

Anthropometry was introduced into India by Sir Herbert Risley in his Ethnographic Survey of Bengal. This was the first attempt to apply to Indian Ethnography the methods of systematic research sanctioned by the authority of European

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\* Vidal de Blache, P.—The Principles of Human Geography, p. 173.

† Semple, E. C.—The Influence of Geographical Environment, p. 624

anthropologists. Among these methods the measurements of physical characters occupy a prominent place. "Nowhere else in the world do we find the population of a large continent broken up into an infinite number of exclusive aggregates, the members of which are forbidden by the inexorable social law to marry outside the group to which they themselves belong. Whatever may have been the origin of an earlier development of caste, the absolute prohibition of mixed marriages stands forth now as its most essential and prominent characteristic, and the feeling against such unions is deeply engrained. In a society putting an extravagant value on the pride of blood and the idea of ceremonial purity, differences of physical type may be expected to manifest a high degree of persistence."\*

Travancore is one of the States in India in which caste has been most elaborately developed, and the foregoing remarks fit it with special aptness. According to Risley, the analysis of data collected by him among 89 tribes and castes in Bengal and the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh rendered it possible to distinguish three types, the Aryan, the Mongolian, and the Dravidian. This classification was, at the time, accepted by Flower, Beddoe, and Haddon in England, and Topinard in France. Many additions have since been made to the number of measurements on living subjects by Thurston, Holland, Eickstedt,

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\* Risley—*The People of India*, p. 24.

Cipriani, Macfarlane, and by the writer in Travancore. Risley's work remains and forms the 'keystone of anthropological research in India'. The census report of 1901 laid the foundations on which has been since based all work that has been done on the racial composition of India. The results of such work during the last thirty years have so far changed the whole complexion of the problem that a restatement of the whole position is now required, and his conclusions now require revision. He recognized three main racial types of India, the Dravidian, the Indo-Aryan and the Turko-Iranian, the latter of which was confined to the North-West Frontier, and the two former of which were modified by two subsidiary elements, the Scythian and Mongolian respectively, by introducing the brachycephalic elements in Eastern and Western India. According to Dr. Hutton, "Risley's deductions were coloured by an erroneous belief in the racial composition of India. In any case, it is necessary to clear the deck by throwing overboard some of his deductions. The Dravidian, as conceived by him, has been the first to go, and has been replaced by at least three races, where they recognized only one."\*

### *Anthropometric Data in 1931 Census Report*

In the census of India for 1931, Vol. I, Part III, Dr. Hutton presents a mass of anthropometric data gathered by Dr. Guha. This is said to be engaging

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\* Hutton,—The Census of India 1931, 1. Part I, p. 440.

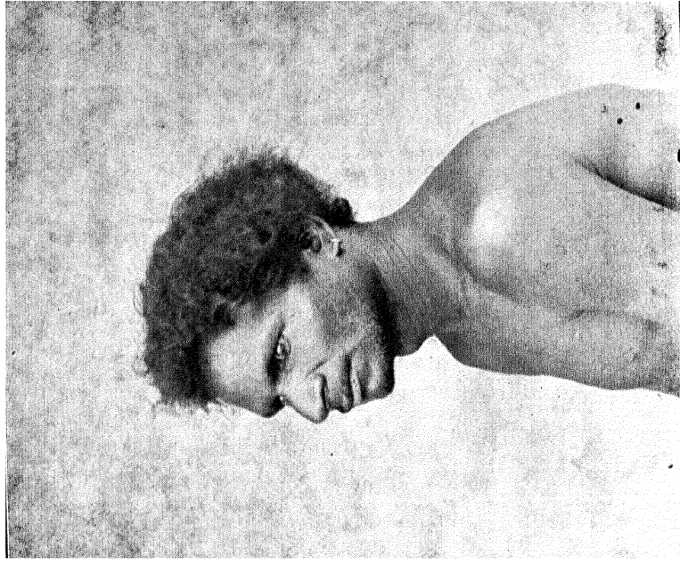
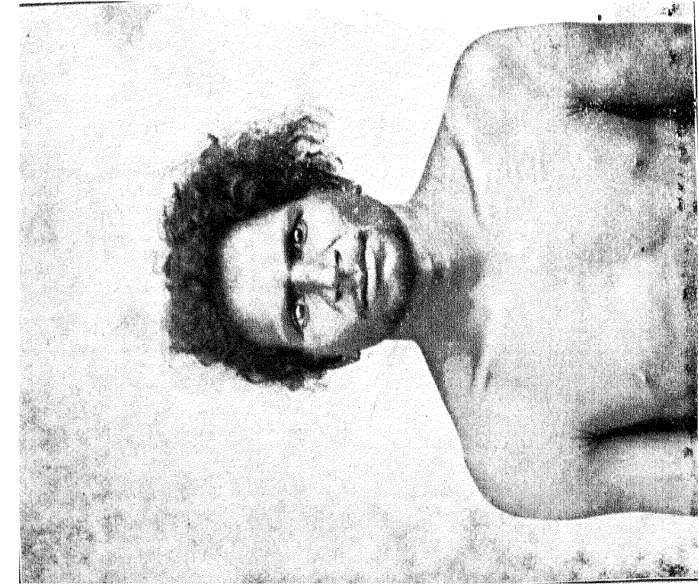
the attention of experts in England. According to Mr. Enthoven, "Dr. Guha's method presents considerable difficulty to the ordinary reader owing to its very intricate mathematical form of presentation. We are given to understand at the beginning of Dr. Guha's report that racial discrimination must be based on the entire somatic constitution of peoples, especially when the data are limited to a few characters—a simple numerical measure of all the differences is therefore required to show the degree of resemblance or divergence of two races or tribes compared."\* Mr. Enthoven also records, that the results of anthropometrical observations recorded in India up to date have been on the whole disappointing, and that the conclusion, which many scholars are apt to arrive at, after considering the data recorded in this connection, is that, on the whole, more progress is likely to be made in tracing racial origins in India from a careful comparison and examination of the contents of heads rather than by measuring their outsides.\* Again, Professor Hodson says, "Though the method of Coefficient of Racial Likeness is without doubt the best available criterion of racial divergence, it is nevertheless not an absolute test, but only a rough measure of how far on the given data a significant resemblance or divergence can be asserted. In assigning an equal value to every one of the characters, it furthermore neglects the differences in the

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\* Enthoven, R. E.—The Ethnographic Survey of India published in the Jubilee Volume of the Bombay Anthropological Society 1938, pp. 59-61.







A Muthuvan Male, Front and Profile.



A Muthuvan Female, Front and Profile.



relative biological significance of the various characters as measures of racial difference. Other factors such as the systematic observations of non-measurable characters should therefore be duly considered.”\* Measurements made on individuals belonging to a race or tribe show definite results characteristic of the group. But the question of detecting racial differences based on such characteristics is by no means easy. A detailed analysis of the measurements from the statistical point of view has to be made. On an analysis of the means, variances, and co-variances, the statistician can assert whether the differences between the groups are significant or not. Such an intensive study is beyond the scope of the present paper and the treatment is limited to a formal application of the fundamental principle that differences between characters are significant if this be greater than two and a half times the standard deviation.

The material available for the determination of the racial elements and affinities of the Indian peoples may be divided into physical, linguistic, and cultural features. According to Sir William Fowler physical characters are the best, in fact, the only true tests of race, that is of real affinity; language, customs, and others may help or give indications, but they are often misleading. It was Sir Henry Maine who first said that the study of the sacred languages of India has given the world the modern science of Philology and the modern theory of race. The belief that linguistic affinities prove community

\* Haddon, T. C.—Census Ethnography, 1901-1931, p. 11.

of descent was one which commended itself alike to populations struggling for freedom and to rulers in search of excuses for removing a neighbour's landmark. According to Sayce, identity or relationship of languages can prove nothing more than social contact.

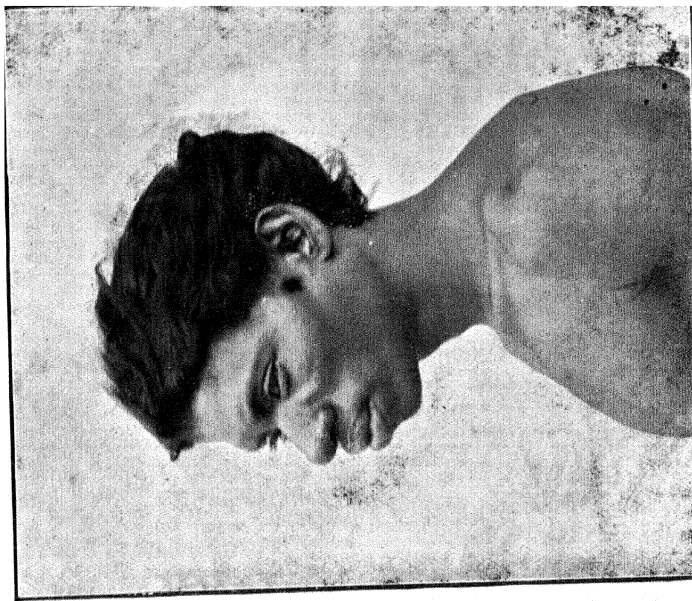
### *Physical Characters*

Coming to physical characters, they are of two kinds, definite and indefinite. The indefinite characters include colour; texture of skin; the colour, form, and position of the eyes; the colour and character of the hair; and the form of the face and features.

#### *1. Colour of the Skin.*

The skin exhibits extreme divergence of colour, and serves, with hair, as a classical basis of distinction of human races. Anthropologists are agreed that primitive men were much alike and were dark in colour. It is said that colouration of the skin is the conjoint effect of a number of environmental factors working through physiological processes. The pigment of the skin is found in the epidermis, and the influence of light favours its formation. In a cold climate, where thermal action is weak, a discolouration of the pigment in the skin and other parts of the body produces a kind of albinism. The Kānikkār, the Ullātans, and the Malayarayans, who live at low elevations, are darker than the Muthuvans, the Mannāns, and the Pāliyans of the High Ranges. Blondness increases appreciably on high hills. "Waitz long ago affirmed the tendency of mountaineers to lighter colouring





A Paliyan Male, Front and Profile.



A Paliyan Female, Front and Profile.





from his study of primitive peoples. This may not be entirely due to climatic contrast between mountain and plain. Economic poverty of the environment and poor food supply have also a hand.”\* Finot thinks that colour is the direct effect of the milieu. Woodroff concludes that “man is invariably covered with a pigment which acts as an armour to exclude the more harmful short rays and moreover the amount of pigment is in direct proportion to the intensity of light of the country to which his ancestors have proved their adjustment by centuries or milleniums of survival of health and vigour.”† The Thantāpulayas, who live in the vast expanse of sand along the coastal region, the Pulayas, and the Parayas, who work in the rice fields throughout the day, are jet black in complexion. “The intensely dark people are all dwellers in hot countries, and are all very dolichocephalic or long-headed. In almost every case, these dark tribes have lived for untold ages in hot climates and have perhaps hardly varied their climatic environment since their original development somewhere in or near the tropics of the old world.”‡

### *Hair and Eyes*

From one end of India to the other, the hair of the great mass of the population is black or dark brown. The Kānikkār have curly hair. “The Ūrālis have also very curly hair which is also harsh

\* Semple, E. C., *The Influence of Geographical Environment*, p. 39

† Duncan, H. G., *Race and Population Problems*, p. 30.

‡ Griffith Taylor—*Race and Environment*, p. 35.

and in some individuals crisp and kinky.”\* Curly hair has been noticed by me among the Malavētans, the Vishavans, the Ullātans, the Malapantārāms, and the Paliyans. The hair so curls on itself that it seems to grow in separate spiral tufts. Dr. Guha has observed the existence of frizzly hair among the Kādars and the Pulayans of the Cochin State.† Dr. Hutton has recently drawn attention to the presence of the Negrito type among the Angami Nagas.‡ To him, the Ūrālis seem to suggest the Negrito as much as the Kādar does.

The eyes of the primitive tribes are invariably dark brown. It is highly probable that brown was the primitive eye colour in man. The brown colour seems to have been retained, as it affords protection for the eye against the strong rays of the sun. Rare cases of albinism are noticed among the Kānikkār. Such men have white skin, yellow hair, and dark blue iris.

### *Definite Characters*

1. *Stature.* Three characters are selected under the definite head. They are the stature, the proportions of the head, and the nose. Darwin holds that “Changes such as size, colour, thickness of skin, and hair have been produced through food-supply and climate from the external conditions in

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\* Hutton, *The Census of India, 1931, 1 : India, Part III, “Ethnographical.”* B. p. 11.

† Hutton, *The Census of India, 1931, 1 : India, Part III, “Ethnographical,”* A. p. 1.

‡ Hutton, *The Census of India, 1931, 1 : India Part I, p. 442.*

which the forms lived.”\* Stature is partly the result of feeding and hence of geographical conditions: “It is a feature which reacts rapidly to changing environment.”† In Travancore, the primitive tribes are generally shorter than those on the plains; but within the hilly regions, “stature is often larger at high than at moderate latitudes, which is ascribed to the influence of rigorous climate in killing off all but vigorous individuals.”‡ Sir Arthur Keith says that “the greater activity of the pituitary gland gives the Caucasian his height of stature, bulk of body, prominent chin, strong eye-brow ridges, and pronounced nasalization.”§ Improvement in the quality or abundance of food or in other conditions has been supposed to lead on the other hand to increase of stature.¶ This may be true of the Malayarayans, the Muthuvans, the Ūrālis and others. The average stature of the primitive tribes of Travancore is given in Table III. The greater height of the Malapulayas, the Paliyans, and the Muthuvans may be due to the more vigorous functioning of the pituitary gland at higher elevations. “Excessive tallness is the result of inherited excessive activity of the pituitary gland, the factors for tallness being mostly recessive due to the absence of inhibition to prolonged growth.”\*\* Davenport says that, “the

\* Semple, R.C., *The Influence of Geographical Environment*, p. 34.

† Griffith Taylor *Race and Environment*, p. 38.

‡ Risley, *The People of India*, p. 31.

§ Duncan, H. G., *Race and Population Problems*, p. 33.

¶ Ruggles Gates, *Heredity in Man*, p. 42.

\*\* Ruggles Gates—*Heredity in Man*, p. 50.

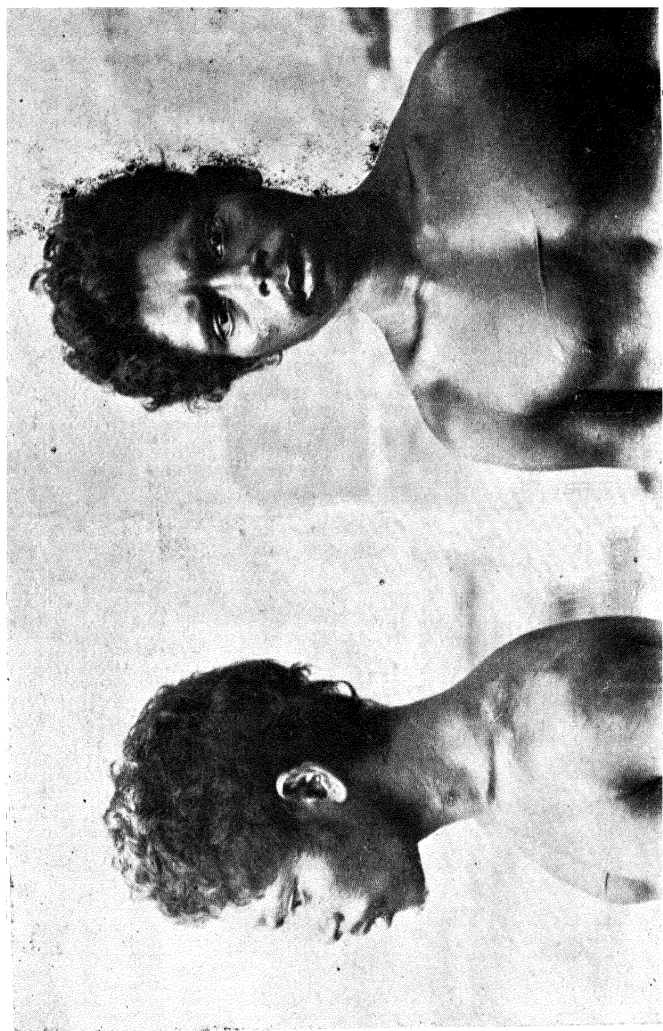
rugged hills of Scotland harbour a race that are relatively giants. Conditions in life cannot account for the difference, there is a difference in blood.”\*

TABLE III.

No.	Name of Tribe.	Number measured.	Statur in Cms	Standard Deviation.	Percentage			
					Pyg-my.	Short	Medium.	Tall.
1	Paraya (Sāmbavar) .	27	164·33	6·66	...	16·67	40·00	43·33
2	Malapulayan .	32	158·84	8·28	18·75	15·63	50·00	15·62
3	Paliyan .	28	157·32	7·60	10·71	42·86	32·14	14·29
4	Mannān .	42	151·90	6·02	23·81	66·67	9·72	...
5	Muthuvan .	90	155·29	7·44	11·11	56·67	31·11	1·11
6	Malaya- rayan .	132	157·83	6·02	3·76	52·63	38·35	5·26
7	Malapan- tāram .	57	154·26	5·49	17·54	61·41	21·05	...
8	Ūrāli .	121	155·69	6·51	7·44	53·72	36·36	2·48
9	Vishavan .	31	155·81	5·95	9·52	57·14	23·57	4·77
10	Nāyādi .	16	152·96	6·06	25·00	62·50	12·50	...
11	Ullātan .	88	153·68	4·63	9·09	69·32	21·59	...
12	Malan- kuravan .	120	153·62	5·86	10·83	70·83	17·50	0·84
13	Malavētan .	63	153·60	5·35	15·87	65·08	19·05	...
14	Pulayan .	95	153·47	6·66	17·89	58·05	22·11	1·95
15	Thanta- pulayan .	38	152·53	4·69	13·16	78·95	7·89	...
16	Kānikkār .	240	153·42	5·78	16·25	66·25	16·25	1·25

\* Davenport, Heredity in Relation to Eugenics, p. 40.





A Malapantaram Male, Front and Profile.

The High Ranges of Travancore, whose elevation ranges from 3,000 to 5,000 feet harbour the Malapulas, the Pāliyas, the Muthuvans, and the Ūrālis, who are taller than the tribes in the low country, who are devitalised by malaria. The Southern Parayas (Sāmbavars) are the tallest because of the dry healthy climate and the high nutritive content of their food. Dwarfing of the type which produces general reduction in size is said to be the result of unfavourable conditions or general inhibition to growth. The effect of a scanty and uncertain food supply is seen in the low stature of the Kānikār, the Malavētan, the Malankuravan, the Pulaya, the Ullātan, and the Nāyādi, because they cease to grow early. According to Duncan's classification of stature, groups classified as short are between  $58\frac{1}{4}$  and  $62\frac{1}{4}$ ; medium between  $62\frac{1}{4}$  and 66 inches; tall between 66 and  $67\frac{1}{4}$ . Those classified as pygmy are not over  $58\frac{1}{4}$  inches high. Judged by this standard, most of the primitive tribes of Travancore are short. The largest percentage below  $58\frac{1}{4}$  inches is 31.58 among the Malapantārams.

2. *Shape of the Head.* According to Risley, the prevalent type of Peninsular India seems to be long-headed, short heads appearing only in the western zone of the country. The primitive tribes of Travancore are long-headed with the exception of the Malapantārams, the Nāyādis, and the Parayas. The dolichocephaly is of a primitive type, for the vault of the head is low and the direction of the brain backward. They show a prognathous



face occasionally. The Malapantārams, the Nāyādis and the Parayas are mesocephalic. 29·73 per cent. of the Malapantārams are dolichocephalic, 64·86 per cent mesocephalic, and 5·41 per cent. brachycephalic. It is considered that the basis of the Negrito race was probably brachycephalic or at least meso. The Malapantārams are in the hunting stage of civilization. According to the definition of Quatrefage, the Negritos are brachycephalic. It seems that admixture with a primitive dolichocephalic race has affected the general shape of the head. They have curly hair. They may be the survivals of a Negrito type. The average cephalic index of the tribes is given in Table IV. The largest percentage of dolichocephaly is among the Muthuvan and the Ūrālī.

TABLE IV.

No.	Name of the Tribe	Number Measured.	Average Cephalic Index.	Standard Deviation.	Percentage		
					Dolicho	Meso	Brachy
1	Malavētan	63	73·85	3·29	61·29	38·71	...
2	Malankuravan	120	74·33	3·22	58·33	35·84	5·83
3	Kānikkār	240	74·00	3·33	57·32	38·61	4·07
4	Muthuvan	90	72·50	3·07	76·14	22·73	1·13
5	Ullātan	88	74·10	3·03	65·92	32·58	4·50
6	Ūrālī	121	73·05	2·86	73·02	26·08	...
7	Malapulayan	32	74·38	2·63	54·55	36·36	9·09
8	Paliyan	28	74·46	3·49	50·00	46·43	3·57
9	Pulayan	95	74·92	2·09	47·92	47·92	4·16
10	Malayarayan	132	73·82	3·26	63·36	32·82	3·82
11	Vishavan	21	74·00	2·49	66·67	28·57	4·76
12	Mannān	42	74·27	2·72	53·49	39·47	5·27
13	Thantapulayan	38	74·03	3·66	55·26	39·47	5·27
14	Malapantāram	76	75·95	2·55	29·73	64·86	5·41
15	Nāyādi	16	77·59	2·64	12·50	68·75	18·75
16	Paraya { Sāmbavar	30	78·40	3·14	6·67	63·33	30·00
	Paraya { Paraya	30	76·95	2·97	27·27	57·58	15·15

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*Nasal Index*

Risley finds in India that the nasal index ranks higher as a distinctive character than the stature or even the cephalic index. The nasal index is accepted by all anthropologists as one of the best tests. According to Topinard, there are two types of nose, the low, broad and flat. As a rule, the more prominent a nose is, the narrower it is; the flatter it is, the broader it becomes. The depth increases with the prominence, and narrows and diminishes with the flattening and the broadening.\* The Rig-Veda employs the word 'anasa' or noseless to the Dasyus which designation means 'thieves or demons.' The broad type of nose of the primitive tribes is their striking characteristic. The physical configuration of the country, the vast stretches of fever-haunted jungles, the absence of roads, and the complete social organization of the primitive tribes protect them from the intrusion of foreign influence. Where races with different nasal proportions are intermixed, the index marks the degree of crossing that has taken place. The average nasal index of the tribes is given in Table V. The Malavētan, the Malankuravan, the Kānikkār, the Muthuvan, the Ūrāli, the Malapulaya, the Ullātan, and the Malayarayan have distinctly platyrrhine nose, while the Mannān, the Paliyan, the Vishavan, and the Sāmbavar border on platyrrhiny. The remaining tribes are mesorrhine. The percentage of platyrrhiny is also indicated in the above table. It is very high among the Malankuravan,

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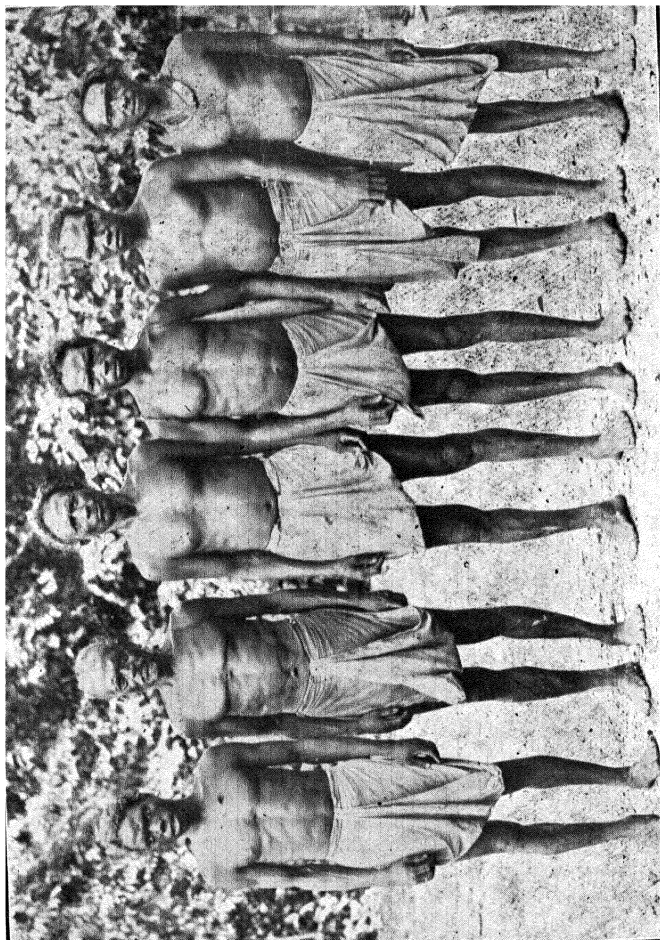
\* Haddon, A. C., *The Races of Man*—p. 87.

TABLE V.

No.	Name of Tribe.	Number Measured.	Average Nasal Index.	Standard Deviation.	Percentage		
					Lepto-rhiny.	Meso-rhiny.	Platy-rhiny.
1	Malavētan	63	89·77	7·76	1·61	25·28	75·81
2	Malankuravan	120	90·86	8·22	..	19·33	80·67
3	Kānikkār	240	89·91	7·88	0·43	24·36	75·21
4	Muthuvan	90	88·71	5·75	...	22·86	77·14
5	Ullātan	88	89·11	6·86	...	22·73	77·27
6	Ūrāli	121	86·75	8·69	1·67	44·17	54·16
7	Malapulayan	32	85·54	6·51	...	45·45	54·55
8	Vishavan	21	83·81	6·28	...	47·72	52·38
9	Pulayan	95	84·52	7·96	4·12	40·21	55·67
10	Paliyan	28	83·68	6·94	...	57·14	42·86
11	Malayarayan	133	85·03	8·26	3·76	38·35	57·89
12	Mannān	42	84·72	9·14	4·65	48·84	46·51
13	Malapantāram	76	81·72	9·04	9·23	49·23	41·54
14	Thantapulayan	38	77·97	6·95	8·82	70·59	20·59
15	Nāyādi	16	77·22	7·41	12·50	75·09	12·50
16	{ Sāmbavar	30	84·83	8·23	6·67	43·33	50·00
	{ Paraya	30	81·52	7·60	6·60	60·61	33·33

the Muthuvan, the Ullatan, the Kānikkār, and the Malavētan. To sum up, short stature, low forehead, flat nose, and dark complexion are the chief characteristic features of the primitive tribes of Travancore.





A Kanikkar Male Group.

## CHAPTER II

### TRADITIONS OF ORIGIN

#### *Introduction*

Tradition is the product of conceptual thought. The products of the thinking of past generation are stored up, transmitted, and retained. Additions are made to the store and improvements are made in the method of storings. Tradition is thus cumulative.\* Progress in tradition may be stimulated by contact of man with man and race with race. The greater the contact, the more quickly and easily is the existing mass of tradition disseminated throughout any society. The influence of contact of race with race has given rise to a large number of traditions among the primitive tribes. The course of past migrations of some of these tribes is now proposed to be traced through oral traditions now current among them. The Kānikkār, the Muthuvans, the Mannāns, and the Ūrālis entertain traditions of having come from the adjoining district of Madura or Tinnevely. No tribe has such a wealth of traditions of origin as the Kānikkār of South Travancore. They have been handed down from generation to generation in popular songs which they sing now.

#### *Kānikkār*

The Kānikkār of Kōttur in Neyyattinkara taluq sing a chattu song on their past history. It recounts that they formerly settled down in Kalakad

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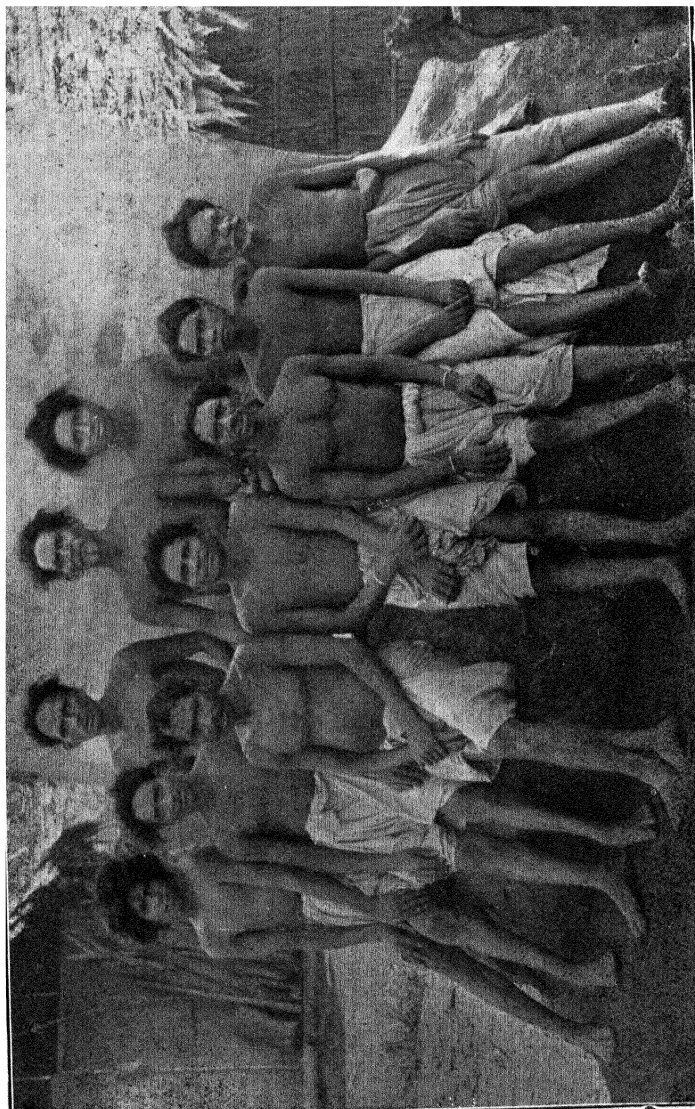
\* Carr Saunders—The Population Problem—p. 414.

and Kallidakurichi in Tinnevely district. There were 72 Kāni hamlets under three chieftains, Virappan Arayan of Viranelli Kōtta, Sīthangan Arayan of Chēnnalur Kōtta, and Ādichan Arayan of Ālanthara Kōtta. In olden times, the Attingal chief possessed rights over 'Kalakad and Kallidakurichi'. The failure of the Kānikkār to appear before the chief (Ponnum Perumal) for three years led to the despatch of his minister, Māthutti Pillai, to Kalakad with a Royal Command, directing the appearance of the three hill-chieftains before him immediately. In obedience to the royal call, the three chieftains went to Attingal and made presents of honey, ivory, tiger-skin, leopard-skin, bamboo-seeds, and other things to His Highness.

His Highness was so much pleased that he conferred on Virappan Arayan the title of Vira Mārthāndan Arayan and gave the chief profuse presents. It was also ordered that Vira Mārthāndan Arayan might collect a tax from the Kānikkār of the 72 hamlets. His Highness was about to arrange for the feeding of the hill-chieftains and their followers, when Vira Mārthāndan informed him that they would themselves cook their food and that they would be satisfied, if they were given provisions. These were accordingly supplied. While they were on their way to cook their food, they were accosted by Chennan and Chakki (Chānnāns by caste) who invited them to their home. There they ate the food given by Chakki. His Highness, who was informed of the incident, said, "Mannuchānnān Malayarasan," which means "by







A Muthuvan Male Group.

your association with Chānmān, you have fallen in my estimation. You deserve to be only Malayarayan or lord of the hills”.

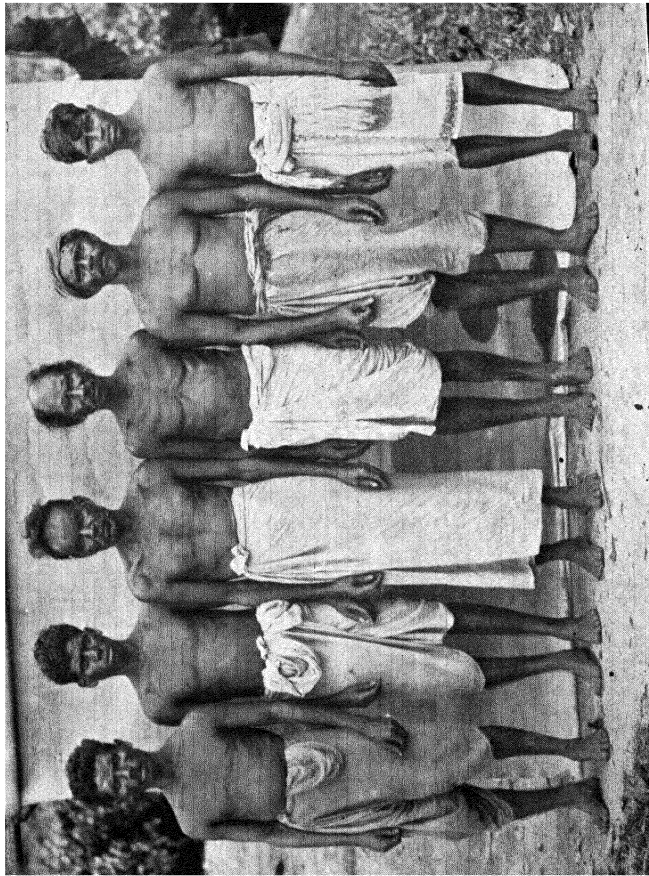
Vīra Mārthandan Arayan reached Kalakad, and collected and enjoyed the tax from 72 hamlets as ordered by the Attingal chief. He then decided to celebrate his installation ceremony as Chief of the Kānikkār, and issued invitations to Adi Pāndi Pāndiyan, Mid-Pāndi Pāndiyan, and Thala-Pāndi Pāndiyan, and others to the ceremony. Adi Pāndi Pāndiyan scoffed at the invitation and jeeringly sent word that he would attend the ceremony, if the Chief's sister were given to him in marriage. This reply provoked Vīra Mārthandan so much that he decided to divert the waters of the Kōthayar, the Paraliyar, the Manimuthar, and the Chemburanthar from flowing into Adi-Pāndi by constructing a dam. Some water still trickled to Adi-Pāndi. The medicine-man (Plāthi) told Vīra Mārthāndan that, if the dam were bismearcd with the blood of his sister, Karimpandi, no water would flow to Adi-Pāndi. No less a sacrifice was demanded of Vīra Mārthāndan, but he did not flinch from carrying out the words of the medicine-man. The insult was so keenly felt that the blood of his sister was poured on the dam, and no water trickled down eastwards thenceforward. This brought famine to Adi-Pāndi. After ascertaining the cause, the Pāndiyan Chief repaired to the Attingal Chief, and sought relief. Māthutti Pillai was sent to Kalakad to break the dam with an elephant and allow water

to flow eastward. Vīra Mārthāndan tried to dissuade him from doing it, but his words were not heeded. When Māthutti Pillai proceeded to break the dam with the elephant, Vīra Mārthāndan discharged an arrow and killed the elephant. Māthutti Pillai committed suicide saying, "you have killed your sister and my elephant. I too shall end my life here." This tragic event enraged the Adi-Pāndi Pāndiyan and he declared war against the Kānikkār. The latter were defeated and their chieftains committed suicide. But some of the Kānikkār escaped to Travancore and are said to be the earliest Kāni settlers in this country. The memory of Māthutti Pillai is enshrined in their religious songs, and offerings are made to him even to this day. This is the tradition current among the Kānikkār about their emigration into Travancore.

The history of Travancore tells us that "the famous warrior-kings, Sri Mankoda Bhuthala Vīra Sri Vīraladaya Mārthānda Varma, conquered the whole of Tinnevely district from the Pāndiyans about 700 M. E. (1531 A. D.) and married a Chola Princess, Cholakula Valli, who brought with her the district of Calcaud as dowry. The dam across the Kōthayar which stands even now under the name Vīrapuliana is said to be erected at the period."\* Kalakad witnessed several vicissitudes of fortune in later times. It now forms part of the British dominion in India. According to the tradition current among the Kānikkār, they were in

\* V. Naganish, *The Travancore State Manual*, Vol. I. p. 37.





A Mannan Male Group.

Kalakad when it formed part of Travancore, and they emigrated to this country as a result of their defeat in the war with the Adi-Pāndi Pāndiyans.

### *The Muthuvans*

The Muthuvans on the Cardamom Hills believe that they were immigrants from Madura and that they were driven to the hills owing to internal dissensions. It may possibly have been at a time when the Telugu Naickans took possession of Bodinaickanur in the fourteenth century A. D. The Muthuvans who came to the High Ranges of Travancore *via* Bodinaickanur carried their children on their back when they climbed up the Ghats and hence they have come to be known as Muthuvans (Muthuku meaning back). This is one version. Another version is that, when they left Madura, they carried on their back the goddess Meenakshi, and are therefore called Muthuvans. The Muthuvan males even now carry loads on their back, the females, their babies.

### *The Mannāns*

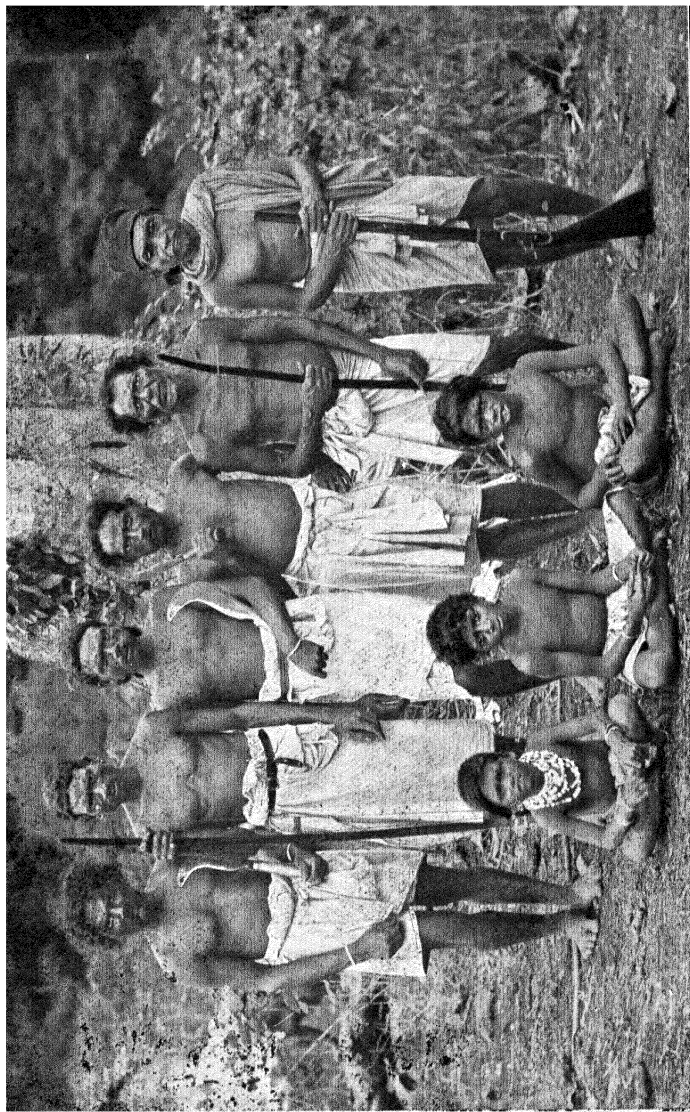
The Mannāns also claim that they came from Madura to the Cardamom Hills of Travancore. Being fond of animal food, they thought that they could live comfortably on the Travancore Hills, which abounded in sambar, black monkey, and other wild animals. The quest for food is, therefore, said to be the cause of their immigration. Another version is that they were formerly dependents of the king of Madura. Owing to internecine dissensions, they were obliged to leave Madura

under the leadership of a chief known as Poonjat Raja. They entered the hills *via* Cumbummettu and settled down in various parts of the Cardamom Hills. They also installed their deity, Chokkanadar on the Chokkanad peak, and Chantiyat Amma at Ayyapancoil. It is said that they once owned a small tract of land near Cumbum. It was leased to the people of that place and the produce realised was used for temple service by the Varayil Kizil Mannān. This land was lost through litigation. Tradition has it that one of the former Rajas of Poonjat nominated three Mannāns as his agents for the management of his dominion. One of them was installed at Talliaramalai with a silver sword as his badge, the second, Gopura Mannān was installed at Udumbunchola. Since the Cardamom Hills passed into the hands of the Government of Travancore, they owe only a nominal allegiance to the Poonjat Chief, who is still held in veneration by them.

### *The Ūrālis*

The Ūrālis claim that they were the dependents of the king of Madura, and that their duty was to hold umbrellas during State processions. In ancient times, many of the parts included in the Thodupuzha taluq belonged to the king of Madura. Once when the king came to Neriambangalam, the ancestors of the Ūrālis are said to have accompanied him and were probably left there to rule the locality.\* This fits in with another account that is current among them. Formerly there was

\* N. Subramania Iyer—The Travancore Census Report 1901, p. 350.



An Uruli Male Group.





a chief known as Nedittu Thampuran ruling over a tract of about four square miles of land called Nedittu in the Arakulam hills of Thodupuzha Range. The Ūrālis were his vassals. They were fond of the sweet toddy drawn from Āzhathengu (Arenga Wightii) and used to tap the trees for it. The chief observed the tapping of the palm for some days and desired to drink some of the juice. He therefore climbed the tree unobserved for a few days and drank the juice. As the Ūrālis were not getting the usual quantity of juice, they grew suspicious, and resolved to keep watch over the tree. They found the chief climbing the tree and drawing the juice. Prāla Ūrāli discharged an arrow at the chief. It did not strike him, but hit the bottom of the bamboo tube. The chief was infuriated. He descended from the tree and said, "May you adiyars (slaves) remain prosperous. May those who aimed at my life suffer extinction." The chief then left for Thodupuzha. The Ūrālis consider that they were his vassals and pay homage to him in his temple at Nedittu. The Mannāns are said to have held sway over the Ūrālis in former times. They were a source of terror to the Ūrālis, and any Ūrāli who remained in a tree-house on the arrival of the Raja Mannan was caught and severely chastised. The Raja Mannan used to be the arbiter of their disputes, and they paid him 4 chuckrams and one para of paddy each annually, but, since they passed into the tutelage of the Government of Travancore, they stopped this payment.

### *The Paliyans*

The Paliyans of Vandamet say that they were living in Madura, and a Pantāram told them that they would find it congenial to go and live on the Cardamom Hills in Travancore which were uninhabited. On hearing this, they came to the Cardamom Hills and settled down at Vandamet. Another tradition current among them is that a Kallar of Madura had two wives, and that, when some dissensions arose, his children by the second wife fled to Sankurandamalai, fearing molestation. Those who did not fall a victim to the marauders came to be known as Paliyans. They came to the Cardamom Hills *via* Bodinaickanur. In memory of this connection, the Kallars of Madura refrain from doing any harm to the Paliyans. These two tribes interdine, but do not intermarry. A Kallar will not allow a Paliyan guest to depart without being fed. The Paliyans pride themselves on being called Kāttukallars. The Kallars proper are known as Nāttukallars.

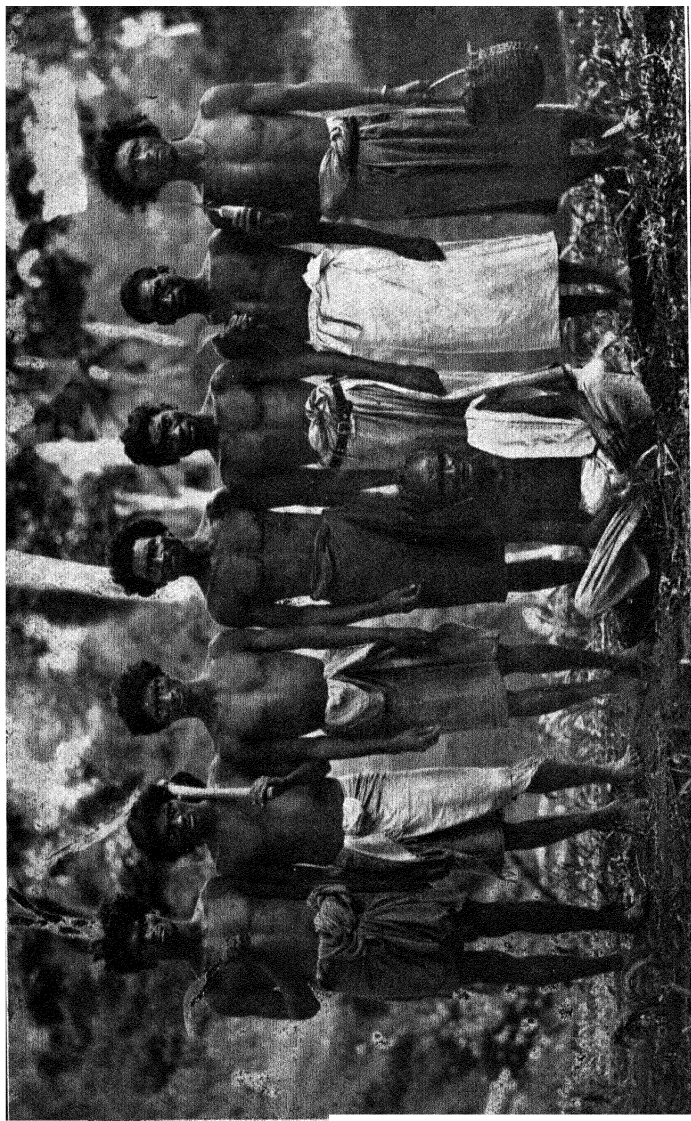
### *The Vishavans*

The Vishavans seem to think that they are autochthonous, but the names of some of their exogamous clans indicate that they came from Adirapalli in the Cochin State; for example, the Maringathukars are those who came from Maringath near Adirapalli.

### *Conclusion*

The traditions current among some of the primitive tribes as to their origin and migration to





A Paliyan Male Group

Travancore Hills have been described so far; but the people of the plains generally ascribe the colonization of the hills to sage Agastya who came from the north. It is said, "that sage Agastya repaired to Dwaraka (Tamil Tuvarupathi), and taking with him eighteen kings of the line of Sri Krishna, eighteen families of Vels or Velirs, and others, moved to the south with the Aruvalar tribes who appear to have been the remnants of the Kurumbas.\* The Kurumbas appear to be the remnants of a great and widespread people, who erected the dolmens, and form one of the Pre-Dravidian tribes of South India.† Agastya had the forests cleared and built up kingdoms settling there the people he brought with him. This migration is said to have taken place about 1075 B. C. Popular tradition supports the theory of Agastya's conquest of South India. The footprints of Agastya in his adventurous journey to the south are said to be visible at various places and the stages of his travels are marked by the little Asramas (hermitages) he set upon his way. The Travancorean holds in great veneration the Agastyar peak, the highest peak of the Western Ghats, where Agastya is said to live even today, and his image is installed and worshipped at the Olakarivu waterfall on the Asambu hills in Thovala taluq, at Marutuamala near Cape Comorin, at Nagercoil, and other places. The adventures of Agastya are relevant to the extent that he is said to have

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\*Srinivasa Iyengar, M., *The Tamil Studies*, pp. 45 and 46.

†Keane, A. H., *Man Past and Present*, p. 169.

played a conspicuous part in reclaiming primeval forests in Southern India and making them fit for human habitation. Even to this day, the **Kānikkār** of South Travancore curse their enemies by **swearing** by Agastya and make annual offerings to him at Agastyar peak.

The Epic and Puranic legends contain traditions relating to the physical characters of the aborigines (Nishādas). "The Bhagavata Purana describes the Nishāda as black like crows, very low-statured, short-armed, having high cheek bones, low topped nose, red eyes, and copper-coloured hair."\* His descendents are distributed over the hills and forests. The Anamalai Hills in Southern India form the refuge of a whole series of broken tribes. They are characterised by dark hair, short stature, and broad nose. Since the physical features of the Puranic Nishādas indicate their affinities to the so called Pre-Dravidians, Mr. Chanda considers the short-statured and broad-nosed jungle tribes as the modern Nishādas representing the old Nishāda race.† It now remains to be seen what light anthropometry has to throw on the matter.

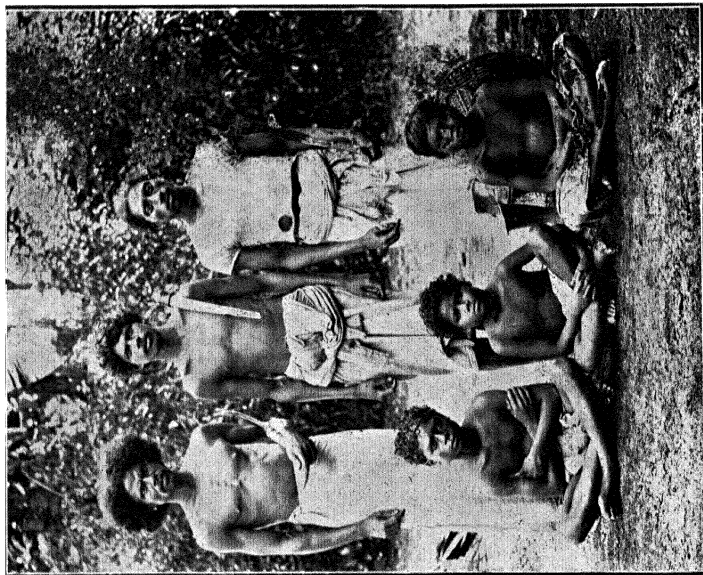
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\* Chanda, R. P., The Indo-Aryan Races, Part I. p. 5.

† Do. Do. Do. p. 9.







A Vishavan Male Group.

## CHAPTER III.

### RACIAL AFFINITIES

#### *Early Views on Racial Origins*

The Nishāda was reckoned by Sir Herbert Risley as belonging to the "Dravidian Race", occupying the oldest geological formation in India, the medley of forest-clad hills, terraced plateau, and undulating plains which stretch from the Vindhya Hills to Cape Comorin. He is recognised everywhere by his black-skin, his squat figure, and the Negro-like proportions of the nose. Risley looked to the researches of Thurston to define and classify the numerous sub-tribes. "In describing the Hindu type Topinard divided the population of the Indian peninsula into three strata, the Black, the Mongolian, and the Aryan. The remnants of the first are found at the present time shut up in the mountains of Central India under the names of Bhils, Mahairs, Gonds and Khonds; and in the south under the names of Yanadis, Maravars, Kurumbas, and Veddahs. Its primitive characters apart from its dark colour and low stature are difficult to discover, but travellers do not talk of woolly hair in India."\* Mr. Thurston continues, "that there is much that speaks in favour of the view that the Australians and the Dravidians sprang from a common main branch of the human

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\* Thurston, "The Dravidian Problem"---The Madras Museum Bulletin, 2, No. 3, p. 197.

race. The Veddahs of India and Ceylon, whom one might call Pre-Dravidians, would represent an offshoot of the main stem. Southern India was once the passage ground by which the ancient progenitors of the Northern and Mediterranean races proceeded to the parts of the globe which they now inhabit. In this part of the world as in others, antiquarian remains show the existence of peoples who used successively implements of unwrought stone, of wrought stone, and of metal fashioned in the most primitive manner. These tribes have also left cairns and stone circles indicating burial places. It has been usual to set them down as earlier than Dravidian. It has been stated that the wild tribes of Southern India are physiologically of an earlier type than the Dravidian tribes.”\*

### *Ruggeri*

Sergi rightly separates from the Dravidians a highly platyrrhine type, of a nature less than of medium type showing the greatest affinity with the Veddahs, and together with the second type he also perceives a third in the peninsula especially among the Kadars, which type is also platyrrhine, and of a low stature, but with short and woolly hair and a Negroid face. They are the remnants respectively of the Australoids and the Negritos, who were afterwards more closely placed in relief by Biasutti.

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\* Thurston, "The Dravidian Problem," The Madras Museum Bulletin 2, No. 3, p. 190.





A Malavetan Male, Front and Profile.

The following ethnic stratification is given for India\* :—

1. Negritos.
2. Pre-Dravidians.
3. Dravidians.
4. Tall dolichocephalic (Mesopotamic) elements.
5. Dolichocephalic Aryans.
6. Brachycephalic Leucoderms.

“ Our theory is that the Dravidians are Australoid-Veddahs, and are not to be confused with an oriental extension of the Mediterranean race which **Risley** thinks, or with **Elliot Smith** a Brown race whose anthropological consistency is somewhat equivocal. It would be useful to see what physical characters are presented by the pre-historic skulls of India, especially of the Bayana type which **Mitra** refers to as of Pre-Dravidic Veddah type, and those of Adichanallur which, according to **Lapicque**, but in a different sense from others, that is, **Negroid**. ”\*  
“ **Ruggeri** mentions four skulls from the vicinity of Madras with a head index of 60. **Thurston** describes them as prognathous and with the receding forehead of the negro rather than of the Veddah. These skulls are of considerable interest in connection with the affinities of the lower Melanesian negro with the African negro; for not many links are known in the wide extent separating the two groups.”† The Pre-Dravidians were followed by a finer type; although dark-skinned, the nose was

\* **Ruggeri**, *The First Outlines of a Systematic Anthropology of Asia*, p. 53.

† **Griffith Taylor** —*Race and Environment*, p. 182.

less wide, and as deep at the root as in the Veddahs, and the profile much less prognathous, really almost orthognathous. It is the Dravidian type akin to the Ethiopian (not Negroid). "They are found in their purest form in the South Indian jungles. Of these are the Kota, Badaga, and Kurumba peoples of the Nilgiri mountains of South India. They have leptorhine noses (index 75) and are somewhat taller than most of the so called Dravidians with a nasal index of 84 to 94. Richards points out that the Dravidian is more leptorhine than the Pre-Dravidian."\*

If we arrange a series of measurements of the jungle tribes in the order of descending nasal index, it may be seen that, as we advance from platyrrhiny to mesorrhiny, there is an increase in the proportion per cent of the Dravidian type, which we considered to be mesorrhine. I give below the results of my

TABLE I.

No.	Tribe.	Number.	Stature in cms.	Cephalic Index,	Nasal Index.
1	Paniyan	25	157.4	74.0	95.1
2	Kadir	23	157.7	72.9	89.8
3	Kurumba	22	157.9	76.5	86.1
4	Sholaga	20	159.3	74.9	85.1
5	Irula (Nilgiris)	25	159.8	75.8	84.9
6	Malavetan	25	154.8	73.4	84.8
7	Kānikkar	20	155.2	73.4	84.6
8	Paliyan	26	150.9	75.7	83.0
9	Ūrāli	57	159.5	71.6	80.1
<i>Typical Tribes of Homo Indo-Africanus</i>					
1	Kota	25	162.9	74.4	77.2
2	Badaga	40	164.1	71.7	75.6
3	Kurumba of Mysore	50	163.6	77.5	73.5

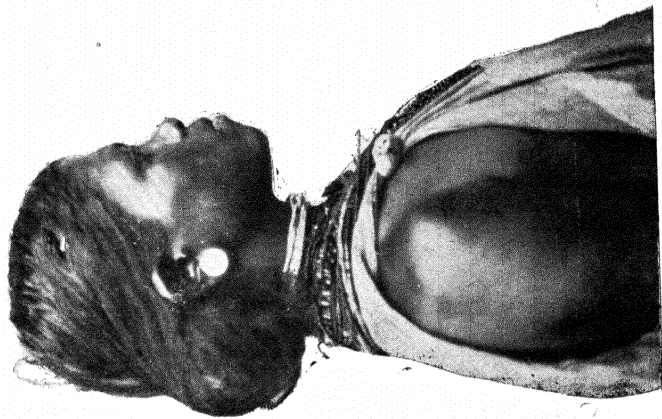
\* Griffith Taylor—Race and Environment, p. 182.







A Malapulaya Male, Front and Profile.



A Malapulaya Female, Front and Profile.



study based on extensive measurements of the primitive tribes of Travancore. Comparing the two summaries, one can understand at a glance how the intercrossing of the jungle tribes has the effect of diminishing the platyrrhine feature as seen among the Tamil Irulans whose nasal index comes down to 80·4. Thurston expressly

TABLE II.

No.	Name of Tribe.	Number Measured.	Stature in Cms.	Cephalic Index.	Nasal Index.
1	Malavētan .	63	153·60	73·85	89·77
2	Malankuravan .	120	153·62	74·33	90·77
3	Kānikkār .	240	153·42	74·00	89·91
4	Muthuvan .	90	155·29	72·50	88·71
5	Ullātan .	88	153·68	74·10	89·11
6	Ūrālī .	121	155·89	73·05	86·75
7	Malapulayan .	32	158·84	74·38	85·54
8	Vishavan .	21	155·81	74·00	83·81
9	Pulayan .	95	153·47	74·92	84·52
10	Thantapulayan .	38	152·53	74·03	77·97
11	Paliyan .	28	157·32	74·46	83·68
12	Malayarayau .	132	157·83	73·82	85·03
13	Mannān .	42	151·90	74·27	84·72
14	Malapantāram .	76	154·26	75·95	81·72
15	Nāyādi .	16	152·06	77·59	77·22
16	{ Sāmbavar .	30	164·33	78·40	84·33
	{ Paraya .	30	153·33	76·95	81·52

notes the physical change that takes place when the tribes leave the jungle and approach the cities. His observation on the nasal index of the Kānikkār is given in Table III. It will be seen that the

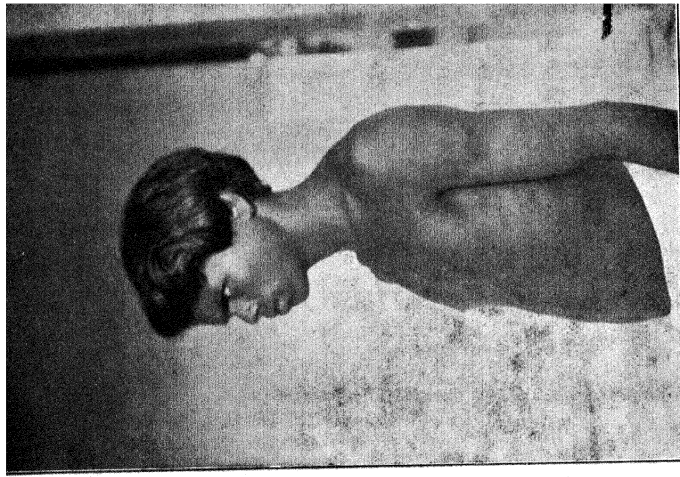
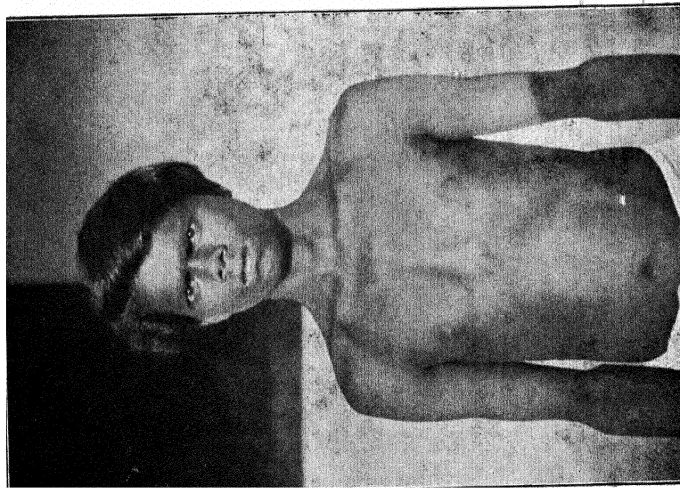
TABLE III.

Type.	Average Nasal Index.	Maximum Nasal Index.	Minimum Nasal Index.
Jungle	84·6	105·0	72·3
Domesticated	81·2	90·5	70·8

nasal index of the jungle Kānikkār is higher than that of the domesticated Kānikkār of the plains. This is an instance of primitive short, dark-skinned, and platyrhine type changing as a result of contact metamorphosis towards leptorhiny. A great elevation in nasal index is observed among the tribes of Chota Nagpur and Western Bengal. "Biasutti includes their habitat in the area where a purer Veddaic substratum has persisted. Deniker recognises that the Veddahs are the remnants of a very primitive population, whose physical type is most approached by a platyrhinous variety of the Dravidian race thus indicating precisely the Santals, the Mundas, the Kols, and the Bhumij. We prefer to confine the Dravidian race to the mesorhine type. In such manner we confer on the Pre-Dravidians the present numerical preponderance, and their importance in the ethnical stratification of India augments proportionately."\*

\* Ruggeri, *The First Outlines of a Systematic Anthropology of Asia*, p. 58.





A Kanapulaya Male, Front and Profile.

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*Eickstedt.*

Baron von Eickstedt has thrown new light on the ethnical composition of India. According to him, the most primitive racial stratum are the Weddids. They probably number over 20,000,000, and only a century ago, formed one-third of the whole population of India. The Gondids and the Malids are the most important sub-types. The Gondid race is chiefly characterised in the widely spread Gond tribes of Central India. The Malids form the southern sub-type of the Weddids. The type is here more primitive than among the Gondids. In the case of many individuals, the face is extremely low and lozenge-shaped. This shape is the consequence of very wide jaw bones and pointed chin. The chin is moreover small, and its profile, particularly in the case of women, extremely retreating. The nose is very broad and low, the steep forehead often overhangs the eyes. The lips are fairly thick, at any rate thicker than is the case with the Gondids. Quite often the face is lightly prognathous. They are extremely dark-skinned, indeed almost black-brown. Dr. Eickstedt's view is that it is not correct without more ado to associate the Malids with the Negrito (as has been done by Lapicque and Keane). Negritos are indeed of small stature, even very much smaller than the Malids, and they have dark skins and curly hair, but they by no means reveal the primitiveness of the Malids. It would be more cautious and more likely correct to assume the existence of a Proto-Negrito element and its fusion



into the ancient Indian Weddid aborigines. Eickstedt thinks that "this standpoint does not differ very materially from that of Keane, but signifies a deepening and differentiation of our view, as must be expected with our advance of knowledge."\* According to him, "the Malids are only found in the forest areas of India. They form a thick band running northwards from the southernmost Cardamom Hills to the Nilgiris, splitting up here and continuing on the one hand as far as some uncertain northern limit in the West Mysore forests and over the Nallamalais as far as Krishna. Kānikkār, Malabēdar, and Kurumbar are characteristic groups in the west, and Irular, Yanadi, Chenchu, etc., in the east."†

*The Negrito element in Travancore*

The presence of a Negrito strain in the aboriginal population of South India was suspected by early observers, but definite evidence was lacking. Its existence among the Kadars of the Cochin State was several times advanced by Preuss, Keane, Sergi, and Haddon. The researches of Lapicque among the Kādars convinced him that the existence of 'une race nigre primitive' was incontestable.

Dr. Hutton has drawn attention to the presence of the Negrito type among the Angami Nagas and says, "In the Kadars and the Ūrālis of

\* Ananthakrishna Iyer, L. K., *The Mysore Tribes and Castes*, Vol. I, Eickstedt.—*The Position of Mysore in India's Racial History*, pp. 20-25.

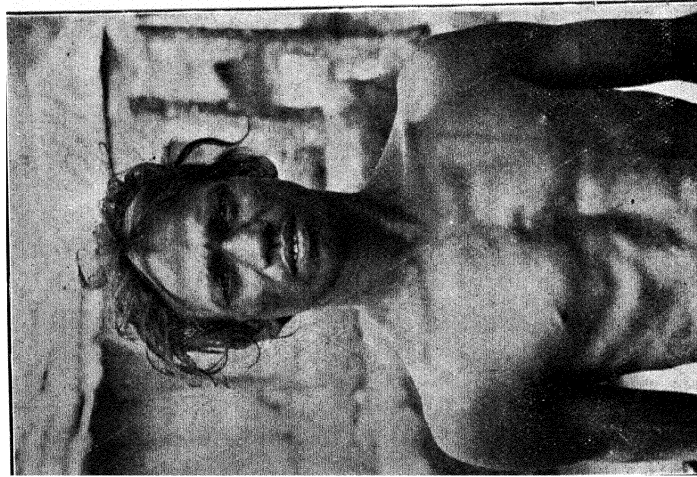
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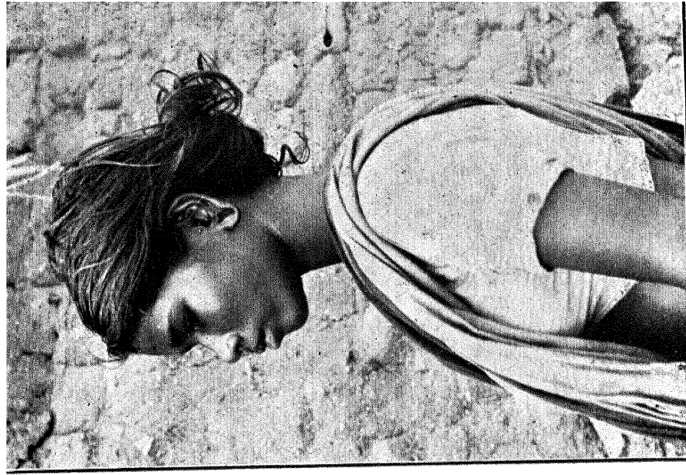
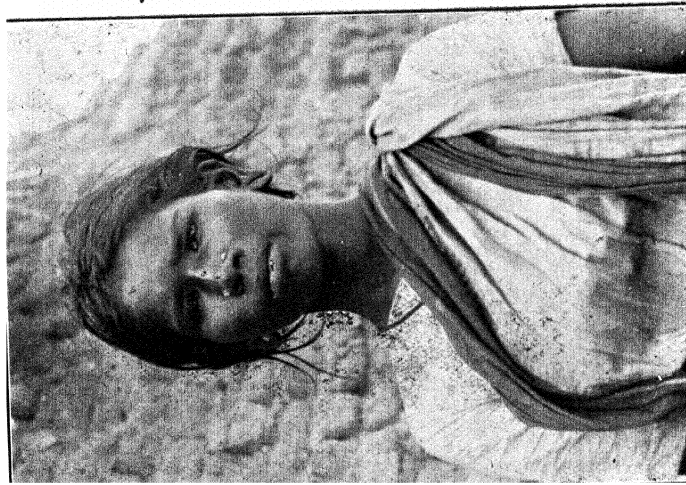
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p. 26.





A Sambavar Male Front and Profile.



A Sambavar Female, Front and Profile.



the extreme south, occasional individuals with frizzly hair and low stature and negro-like features are very suggestive of survivals of the Negrito race.”\* To Dr. Hutton, the Ūrālis seem to suggest the Negrito as much as the Kadar does. The height of the men is about 5 feet, the hair is very curly, but is also harsh and in some individuals crisp and kinky. The features suggest that the basic type is Proto-Australoid with some admixture of Negrito and Mediterranean. The Kānikkār is also described by him as Proto-Australoid with also some Negrito admixture and being by no means pronouncedly prognathous.† Spirally curved hair has been observed by me among the Ūrālis, the Kānikkār, the Malapantārams, the Malabētans and the Vishavans.

Dr. Guha observed the existence of frizzly hair among the Kadars of the Cochin State. According to him, the comparatively low values of the Coefficient of Racial Likeness found between the Kadar and the Nattu Malayan, and the Yerava, and their divergencies from the Bhil-Chenchu type, coupled with the distinct negroid features in many of the individuals belonging to these tribes seem also due to the Negrito strain among the latter, though it may appear to be submerged at the present moment. It has therefore to be inferred that the remnants of the Negrito race now found among the Semangs and Andamanese were much more widely spread at one time and extended well into the Indian

\* Hutton, *The Census of India, 1931*, 1: *India*, Part I, p. 442.

† Hutton, *The Census of India, 1931*, 1: *India*, Part III B, *Ethnographical*, p. 11.

continent to the south-westernmost end in Cochin and Travancore.

De Quatrefages laid down that the Negritos were brachycephalic. Dr. Guha observes, "though the mean cephalic index of the Kadars was dolichocephalic, among the individuals with frizzly hair, there was a marked tendency for a rise in the index towards mesorhiny as shown by two individuals having 77·34 and 79·29 as the values of their index, which indicated that the basis of the Negrito type was probably brachycephalic or at least meso as in the Semangs, but large admixture with the primitive dolichocephalic race has affected the general shape of their head". Dr. Guha also thinks that the long spirals now seen among most of the Kadars and Pulayas with frizzly hair was probably due to the same admixture. He observed short spirals in two individuals. At the present day, the Negritos are found to be closely similar to the Melanesian type in hair and head-form, but judging from the presence of two men with short spirals and high cephalic index, Dr. Guha is of opinion that the original type was not probably unlike that of the Semangs and Andamanese, among whom designs of bamboo combs identical with those used by the Kadar women are found.\* A comparative statement of the measurements of the Semang, Kadar, and Malapantārams is given below in Table IV.

\* Hutton, The Census of India, 1931, I, India—Part III, A, Ethnographical, p. 1.

TABLE IV.

No.	Name of Tribe.	Sta- ture.	Cephalic Index.	Nasal Index.	Hair.	Colour.
1	Semang (Griffith Taylor)	1507	77·7	97·1	Pepper corn.	Choco- late.
2	Kadar (Thurston).	1556	79·9	89·8	Short spirals.	Do. brown.
3	Malapantāram	1547	76·0	78·0	Spirally curved.	Dark.

In Travancore are found the Malapantārams, a jungle tribe in the hunting stage of civilization. In 1935, I measured 76 individuals of whom 22 were dolichocephalic, 50 mesocephalic, and 4 brachycephalic. Their forehead is receding, and the brow-ridges are prominent. The hair is black and looks curly in some. Their average cephalic index is 75·95. The value of the cephalic index of the Malapantārams is that it goes to confirm the theory that the basis of the Negrito type was probably brachycephalic or at least meso as in the Semangs, but that large admixture with the primitive dolichocephalic race has affected the general shape of the head. The Malapantārams are surrounded by 'doleph' tribes like the Ūrāli, Malayarayans, and the Ullatans.

The presence of a Negrito strain in the aboriginal population of Southern India thus receives additional testimony from its existence among some of the primitive tribes of Travancore, where it has been observed by Dr. Hutton and myself. The photographs will bear ample evidence to it.



The Negrito appears to have been the first inhabitant of South-eastern Asia. Traces of his stock are still to be seen in some of the forest tribes of the higher hills of the extreme south of India, and similar traces appear to exist in the inaccessible areas between Assam and Burma, where a dwarfish stature is combined with frizzly hair such as appears to result from the recent admixtures of the pure or virtually pure Negrito stock of the Andamans with blood from the mainland of India or Burma. Dr. Hutton observes that it is just possible that the bow is still his invention, judging from its existence among the Andamanese. In Travancore, the bow is still used by the Ūrālis, the Muthuvans, the Vishavans, and the Kānikkār.

### *Proto-Australoid*

The Negritos must have been early displaced or supplanted by the Proto-Australoid who formed one of the major elements in the aboriginal population of India. This dolichocephalic type appears to Dr. Hutton to have had its origin in the West. Sewell reverts to the theory of Australian origins, and, in his account of Mohenjo Daro skulls, he definitely associates the Proto-Australoid type with the Australian aborigines on the one hand and with the Rodesian skull in the other. According to Dr. Hutton, the safest hypothesis seems to be that the Proto-Australoid type in India is derived from an early migration from the West, and its special features have been finally determined and permanently characterised in India itself. It is

represented in the purest form in the Veddahs, Malavētans, Irulas, Sholagas, and similar tribes in the hunting stage of Ceylon and Southern India, and perhaps in as pure a form as any in the nearly related Pāliyans of the Palni Hills, whose sole weapon is the digging spud. "If we compare the tribes of Travancore with the Veddahs and the aborigines of Australia, we observe that in the shape of the head and the face, form of hair, and skin colour, the three are essentially alike, though the Australians are taller and show larger absolute dimensions of head than the other two. It may be observed that the Veddahs are closer to the Australians than to the tribes of Travancore and outside, which are the smallest of the three. The shortest and smallest are the Indian tribes, then come the Veddahs, and lastly the Australians. We may assume that all the three belong to the same stock, the Indian tribes retaining the more basic characters. A comparative statement of measurements is given in Table V. It is this type that is primarily responsible for the platyrrhine and dark-skinned elements in India.

TABLE V.

No.	Name of the Tribe.	Stature.	Cephalic Index.	Nasal Index.	Hair.	Colour.
1	Australian	162·5	73·0	Platyrrhine.	wavy	Chocolate.
2	Veddah .	157·1	75·1	84·0	wavy	Do.
3	Malavētan.	153·3	73·5	92·5	curly	Dark.
4	Muthuvan.	154·2	73·8	88·4	wavy	Darkbrown
5	Kānikkar .	152·9	74·2	89·6	spirally curved	Dark.

*Blood-grouping*

The evidence of blood-grouping tests made under the auspices of the Travancore University goes to confirm the view that the Kānikkār are of the same stock as the Australians. 211 Kānikkār were blood-grouped in 1939 by Dr. C. O. Karunakaran and they yielded the following result.

O	A	B	AB
108—51·2 %	39—18·4 %	63—29·8 %	1—0·5 %

A comparison of the results obtained in other parts of India and Australia is made below:—

No.	Name of the Tribe.	No. Blood-grouped.	O	A	B	AB
1	Kānikkar .	211	51·2 %	18·4 %	29·8 %	·5%
2	Kadar . (Macfarlane)	50	48 %	30 %	9 %	12 %
3	Paniyan . (Ayyappan)	250	20 %	60 %	7·60%	10· %
4	Hill Male . (Sarkar)	139	46·76%	15·83%	31·65%	5·76%
5	Australian . (Phillips)	815	56 %	37·7 %	5·3 %	1 %

Barring the Paniyan of Wynad, the Kānikkār, the Kadar, and the Hill Male of Bihar exhibit a larger percentage of O and very nearly approximate figures for the Australian.

The position of the Kānikkār with reference to tribes in different parts of the world is given below:—

No.	Name of the Tribe.	No. Blood-grouped.	O	A	B	AB
1	Bushmen .	615	56·1%	29·6%	7·5%	6·5%
2	Australian .	815	56 %	37·7%	5·3%	1 %
3	Maori .	73	63 %	35·6%	1·4%	...
4	Kānikkar .	211	51·2%	18·4%	29·8%	·5%

Recent work in testing the blood-groups of the Australian aborigines, the Maori, and the Bushmen shows that these and other primitive peoples are high in A, but less in B, confirming the view that the A blood-group originated earlier than the B.\* The Kānikkār however indicate more of B than A, which is probably to be accounted for by the process of miscegenation with the high caste Hindu.

Ruggles Gates thinks it probable that mankind was originally all O blood-group and that A and B have originated subsequently as mutations or germinal changes which are inherited. The statistics of blood-grouping make it probable that the B mutation has never appeared in such peoples as the Australian aborigines, the Bushmen of Africa, and the Basques of Europe which have a high percentage of A, while their low percentage of B has probably come in through crossing.

\* Gates, R. Ruggles—Blood groups and Physiognomy of British Columbia Coastal Indians, J. R. A. I, 1934, p. 41.

Recent researches in the racial distribution of blood-groups have shown that the predominance of group B in India is in strong contrast to Western Europe, where group B is markedly absent. The highest percentage seems to congregate on the mainland of Asia and the adjoining islands of Indonesia. The percentages in India vary from 37·2 to 41·2, a marked contrast to that recorded in England. Latte's opinion is that it is definitely established that the distribution of blood-groups in a given population is related to its ethno-anthropological constitution.\* Group A decreases going east and south from Western Europe and B increases inversely, while O is characteristic of long isolated and marginal communities such as the Australian, Esquimo, Maoris and others. Serological tests in Travancore support the findings of the physical anthropologist in regard to the affinity of the hill-tribes (Kānikkār) with the Australians.

The contribution of the Proto-Australoid to Indian culture may be the introduction of pottery. The presence of the boomerang as well as of the blow-gun in South India may possibly be credited to them, and in the domain of religion probably totemism."† In North Travancore, the blow-gun is found among the Muthuvans and the Vishavans, as large reeds grow in the locality.

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\* Hutton, *Census of India, 1931, Vol. I, India, part I, p. 451.*

† Hutton, *The Census of India, 1931, 1: India, Part I, p. 444.*

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*Conclusion*

The existence of a Negrito strain in the aboriginal population of South India has received additional evidence in Travancore. It has been observed by Lapicque and Dr. Guha among the Kadars and the Pulayans of the Cochin State, and by Dr. Hutton and myself among the Ūrālis and the Kānikkār. Spirally curved hair has been observed by me among the Ūrālis, the Kānikkār, the Malavētans, the Malapantārams, and the Vishavans. These were followed by the Proto-Australoid (Pre-Dravidian). This type is found among the aboriginal tribes of Central and Southern India, and is closely allied to the Veddahs of Ceylon, the Toalas of Celebes, and the Sakais of the Malay Peninsula. The Malavētans, the Muthuvans, the Kānikkār, and others may be regarded as representatives of this group.

At present there are no distinctly Negrito communities in India, nor has any trace of a Negrito language been discovered. But distinctly Negrito features not only crop up continually from the Himalayan slopes to Cape Comorin, but also abound in great megalithic monuments which help us to some extent to unravel the history of their remote past. The observations of Dr. Hutton, Dr. Guha, and myself go to show that Negrito features crop up among the Kadars and the Pulayans, of the Cochin State, and the Ūrālis, the Malapantārams, the Kānikkār and the Vishavans of Travancore.

It is interesting to point out that megalithic monuments are largely found on the High Ranges of Travancore. Dolmens, menhirs, and alignments are found in the region of the Ūrālis, the Mannāns, the Malayarayans, and other jungle tribes of Travancore. Mr. Perry points out that, all the world over, megalithic monuments exhibit such similarities of structure that they must have been the work of a people showing a common culture. It is also worthy of notice that the reality of a stone-using people is evidenced by the use of stones for graves by some of the hill-tribes even now. The dead are buried and a stone is planted at the head and the foot of the grave by the Ūrālis, the Muthuvans, the Mannāns, and the Malayarayans.

Systematic excavations still await the spade of the archæologist in Travancore. Ward and Conner made the earliest of excavations in the State. According to them, all the tumuli appear to be of a period earlier than the Iron Age.\* Mr. Bourdillon once picked up a bronze lamp from one of the tumuli. No skeletal remains have been so far unearthed to bear any direct evidence of the Negrito race in Travancore. Judged by the nature and contents of the objects found, the megalithic remains of the Deccan and South India are said to reveal a uniform culture, and it is considered that the megalithic remains of Southern India are Post-Vedic and later than any similar remains of the Central Indian plateau, from whence the

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\* Ward and Conner—*Memoirs of the Survey of Travancore and*  
*Cochin* Vol. I. p. 10

culture would seem to have spread southwards. The excavations of Mohenjo Daro and Harappa reveal that one of the skulls is Proto-Australoid. A correspondence in type is revealed by one of the South Indian skulls, Adichanallur, which is classed as Proto-Australoid by Elliot Smith. The physical characteristics observed in the skulls are found among the existing South Indian tribes and among the Veddahs of Ceylon. While "Pre-Draavidian" is their time-honoured appellation, Dr. Eickstedt would call them "Weddid" and Dr. Guha, "Nishādic". Dr. Hutton has labelled them "Proto-Australoid" after Sewell. It is fitting that this designation should continue.

\* Hutton, The Census of India, 931, I -Part I, A- p 68.



## CHAPTER IV.

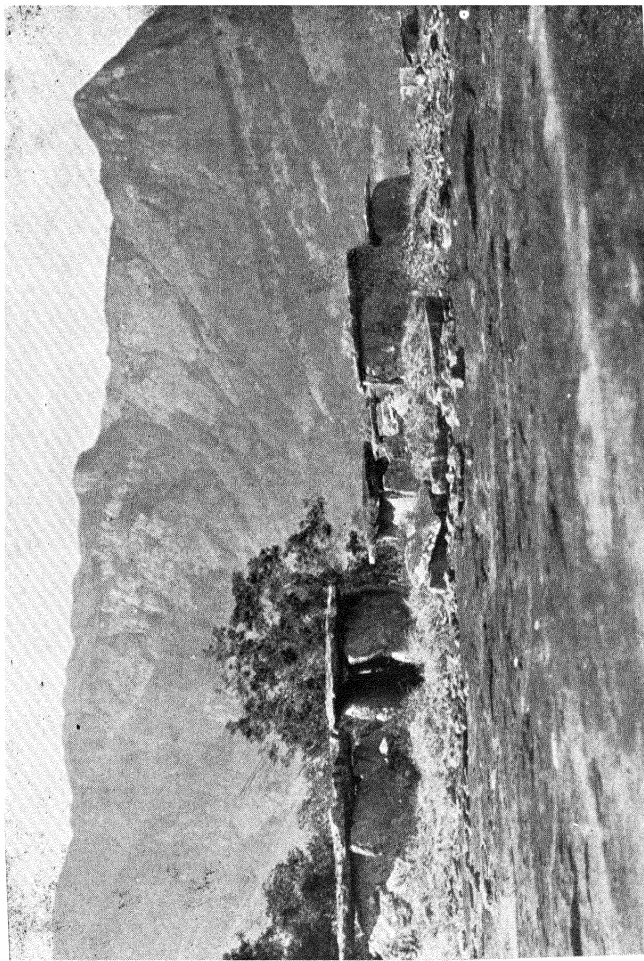
### MEGALITHIC MONUMENTS

#### *Introduction*

The distribution of megalithic monuments follows the zones of the primitive tribes in India. They are found in Assam, Chota Nagpur, South India, and the North-West Frontier regions. They exist over the whole country drained by the Godavari, more commonly in the valleys of the Krishna, and on both sides of the ghats through Coimbatore as far as Cape Comorin. In Travancore the Anjanad valley and the Cardamom Hills abound in megalithic monuments. The dolmens are found on both banks of the Pambar in the Anjanad valley, and command a wide view of the surrounding country so as to be eminently suitable for defence. On the highlands they are larger in size than in the lowlands, where they exhibit a progressive deterioration in size. The great concentration of dolmens is in Bellary, where there are as many as 2,127 dolmens. We observe such concentration of dolmens also in the Anjanad valley in Travancore.

#### *Purpose of Megalithic Monuments*

Respect for the dead appears to have been a prominent characteristic of man in the Palaeolithic and Neolithic periods. It implied a belief in after-life. The most interesting aspect of Neolithic life lay in the rituals of the dead which consisted in the raising of works of rough stone



A View of Dolmen area in Anjanad.



over the dead who were buried in urns. The idea was that the spirit of the dead should be given a location as in life and that the chamber of the dead should be the prototype of the home. They apprehended that "unless the departed spirit had a home and other things as in life, it would hover restless and troublesome around its old abode doing thereby harm to the living."\* To accommodate the spirit they constructed various megalithic monuments which were rude structures built of large pieces of stone. They consisted of single upright stones fixed in the ground, or of rows of such stones, or of large flat stones supported on a number of large uprights. Megaliths belong to the Neolithic period and also to a part of the Copper and Bronze Ages. "Until recently, megalithic remains were thought of as the burial places of mighty chiefs or temples used by the Druids."†

### *Dolmen*

The dolmens are rude structures consisting of large unhewn stone resting on two or more others placed erect. They are found scattered on the long chain of wooded hills in Travancore. They are generally considered to be "stones of the monkeys of India," but most of the primitive people of Travancore have no knowledge of them nor do they evince any interest in them. The people of Anjanad call them Vālividus or abodes of monkeys. Of their antiquity, Professors Macdonell

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\* Rengachari, V., *The Prehistoric India*, p. 111.

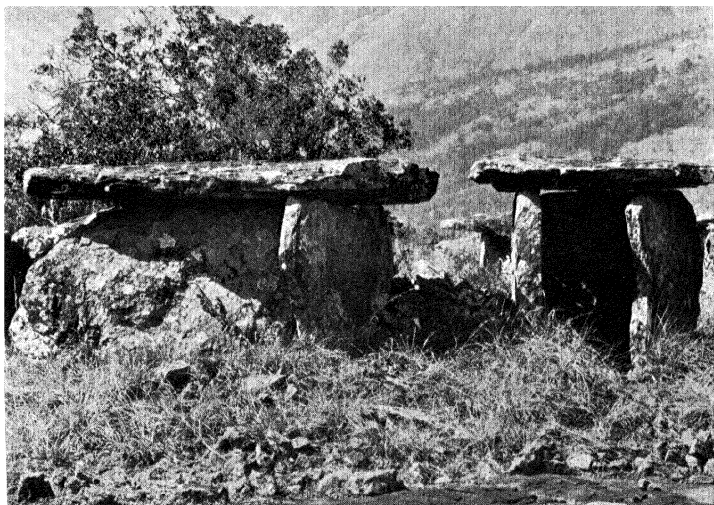
† James, E O., *An Introduction to Anthropology*, p. 148.

and Keith point out references in the *Rig-Veda*, while the late Mr. Gopinatha Rao refers to passages in *Tolkapium* and *Purananuru*. The Ūrālis call them *Pandukuzhies*, pits made by the *Pāndus* or *Pāndavas*, to whom ancient mysterious monuments all over India are generally ascribed. They are looked upon by the credulous as sacred and dangerous. It is said that peasants in France will not take shelter under them or go near them at night, but the *Vellalas* and the *Malapulayas* of *Anjanad* have no such fear. They sit under them, when they graze their cattle. Dr. Borlase thinks that dolmens were connected with the activities of a shady priesthood. Dubriel has tried to connect many of the Deccan megaliths with sacrificial houses in later Vedic literature. It is averred by Walhouse that the people who built them were a race of dwarfs about a span or cubit high, but the results of excavation unfold a different tale. The bones found are neither of dwarfs nor of giants, but of men of ordinary stature and the stone slabs used for monuments indicate that they were cut from solid rock and carried some distance, and the people were physically equal to the present race of men.

The earliest record of dolmens in Travancore was by Ward and Conner in 1852. They state that "the *pandukulies* or barrows, those remains of primæval customs so common throughout the Peninsula, are also found here, though they are not so numerous." The Ūrālis believe that dolmens are places where treasure is hidden. But



A Dolmen in Anjanad showing coursed masonry  
on the cover slab.



A View of typical Dolmens in Anjanad.



no such treasure has been found in any of the dolmens examined. Dolmens are burial chambers in which people of late Neolithic times buried their people of importance. In Travancore they are invariably found on the crests of hills in the Rāni Reserve, and they are built of unhewn blocks of stone. In the erection of dolmens, certain architectural methods and principles are observed. By the use of the orthostatic rock, the maximum of wall area was provided with the minimum of thickness. With the upright wall technique went hand in hand the roofing of narrow spaces by means of horizontal slabs laid across on the top of the uprights. The second feature of megalithic architecture was the use of more or less coursed masonry set without mortar, each block lying on its side, and not its edge. A series of uprights is first put in position, and over these are laid several courses of rather smaller stones.\* A variant of the latter is found in the Anjanad valley.

### *Types of Dolmens*

According to Colonel Meadows Taylor, the dolmens are of two kinds, those consisting of four stones, three supporting stones and one capstone, leaving one side open, and those in which the chamber is closed by a fourth stone; in the latter case, the fourth stone has invariably a circular opening in it. Both these types of dolmens are found in Travancore. The dolmen at Kadukuthi in the Rāni Reserve is rectangular and the portion

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\* Fergusson, *Rough Stone Monuments*, p. 465.



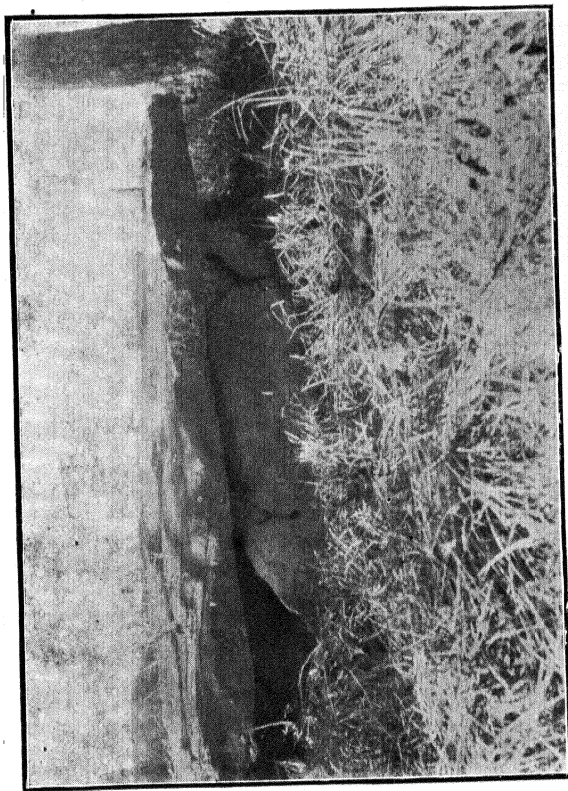
above ground is 8 feet by  $2\frac{1}{4}$  feet in dimensions. It has only one gallery. Lengthwise, it has one single upright on one side, and two others on the opposite side. Sideways, there is one on each side. The floor is paved with a single side slab. The capstone is 7 feet by  $7\frac{3}{4}$  feet and is rudely triangular. The dolmen is situated on the crest of a hill. It appears to have been a dolmen of the earliest times as it is built of unhewn blocks of stone. The presence of stones lying scattered round the dolmen shows that it might have been covered over with them. Excavation yielded me no result.

Rev. Mateer found another type of dolmens on the hills inhabited by the Malayarayans of Travancore. They stand north to south with a circular opening facing the south. A rude stone is fitted to this aperture with another acting as a lever to prevent its falling out. The stones like stones at the top and bottom are single slab. "To this day, the Arayans make similar little cells of stone, the whole forming a box, a few inches square."\*

Dolmens are also found at Perunthalpara on both banks of the Thalayar or Pāmbanar river, a small tributary of the Amaravathi which flows into the Cauvery. Here on a flat level rocky table-land are seen a large number of dolmens in groups of three, four, or five. Around each group is a circular packing of roughly hewn stones or boulders.

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\* Rev. Mateer, *Native Life in Travancore*.



A Dolmen in Rani Reserve.



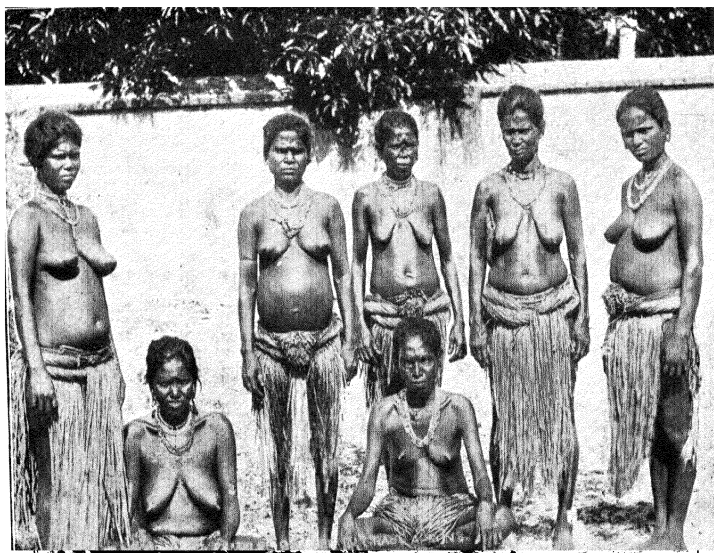
These groups of dolmens are found distributed in a circle. The disposition of the majority of the dolmens is east to west. A few are also in the north to south direction. The upright stones are rectangular in shape, and are about 10 feet long, 5 feet broad, and 7 feet high. The cover-slab is 17 feet by 7·8 inches. The floor is paved with a flat stone-slab 9 feet by 4 feet 6 inches. The inner chamber is 9 feet by 4 feet. Over some of the cover-slabs are found remnants of rubble stone packing. There is a semicircular entrance to the dolmen on one side. Most of these dolmens have four uprights, but one dolmen in some group has only three uprights and one cap-stone, thus leaving one side open. Monuments of this kind are also found in the Bison valley in the Cardamom Hills. At Vadattupara in the Malayatur Reserve there is a dolmen consisting of four uprights, but it is smaller and cruder in shape than those found in the Anjanad valley.

Another type of dolmen is found on the Cardamom Hills near Mattupatti. Here the chamber is formed as described above, but is buried in the earth showing only the capstone above the ground. Dolmens of this type are found on the Nilgiris and throughout Malabar. About 15 yards to the west of the dolmen was found an alignment of monoliths or menhirs planted in the earth at almost equal distances, some small, and some very big and impressive.

At Thondimalai on the Cardamom Hills, the dolmens indicate that a large population must have

inhabited that region in the early Iron Age. "These megalithic tombs are found generally on prominent hill-tops or ridges, and are placed in groups. In all, six of these graves were excavated. They were situated in a straight row, the graves being placed close to one another. After removing the broken stones that marked the spot about one and a half feet below the surface of the ground was found a flat circular stone that gave a hollow sound to a light tapping with crowbar or pickaxe. Underneath the covering stone was found a large urn, the mouth of which was about 15 inches in diameter and the vertical height about three and a half feet, placed in a vertical position in the ground and firmly imbedded in clay and gravel. . . . Inside each of these large urns were found six or eight small urns, eating and drinking vessels, vases, chatties of various shapes and sizes, some of red clay, others black polished inside and outside, of very thin material and very brittle to handle. They were firmly imbedded in fine red clay that seemed to have silted in and partly filled up the large urn, and the small vessels were filled with the same clay very tightly packed, and were wedged in upon one another in such positions as to make it very difficult to remove them unbroken. Bones were found imbedded with the vessels in one urn, and bones crumbled and mixed with clay in others. The Doctor was able to identify one of the bones as the hip bone of a man. On the top of one urn was found the blade of a sword, almost completely rusted through about 2½ feet long with no sign





A Thantapulaya Female Group in their  
primitive costume.

of a handle. It may have had originally a wooden or bone handle that had become completely decayed. Inside the urn were found two iron spear-heads and what appears to be an iron chisel. On the top of the covering stone of another urn was found a piece of a sword, the rest having completely rusted away..... The urn itself and the vessels found inside conform to the various types of what is called "Iron Age Pottery" in the catalogue of Prehistoric Antiquities in the Government Museum, Madras; some of which were taken from Tandigudi in the Palni Hills and other parts of the Madura District, but most of which are from the Nilgiris, the Coimbatore, Malabar and Tinnevely districts.\*

The dolmens are still erected by certain tribes of India and Burma, the Khasi, the Munda, the Gond, the Oraon, the Bhil of Central India, the Kurumba of the Nilgiris, and the Malayarayan of Travancore. In no case are the dolmens of the size characteristic of the prehistoric phase of civilization. The earliest known examples are the largest. The dolmens in the Anjanad valley and the Cardamom Hills bear out this point. Those found on lower elevation in the Rāni and Malayatur Reserves are smaller in size. The loss of culture in the case of the tribes who built megaliths is observed from the fact that the present day tribes do not usually display any tendency to construct dolmens.

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\* Saunders, A. J., Dolmens in the Palni Hills, South India.

(The Madras Mail Annual, 1928.)



Dr. Rivers has brought out this feature very prominently among the Todas of the Nilgiris, where dolmens are largely found. They furnish us with an example of a tribe at a low level of material culture living in a district filled with remains of a fairly high civilization. Sarat Chandra Roy has observed the same fact in Chota Nagpur and Cooper in Assam. In Travancore, the Muthuvans and the Vellalas, who inhabit the dolmen area in Anjanad, evince no interest in them. In the case of the Malayarayans who erect miniature dolmens, a loss of culture can be detected in that they do not manipulate large stones as their predecessors did. Travancore furnishes an instance of the Anjanad valley to illustrate the loss of the material side of culture and shows that regions now inhabited by them were once the scenes of thriving civilization.

### *Menhir*

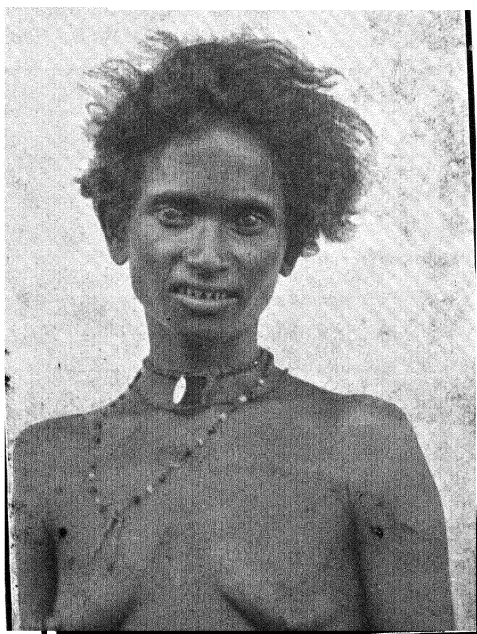
Menhirs are found in parts of North Travancore. They are very few in number. Bruce Foote found some menhirs of moderate size in the Madura district, though without any markings. We are lost in the mists of antiquity in search for the primitive purpose of these monuments. They may be memorial stones. There is a miniature menhir, three feet high at Marayur, called Vāthamkolli.

Perry observes that the reality of a stone-using people is evidenced by the use of stones for graves by the hill-tribes. In Watubela, the dead





A Malavetan chipping the incisor teeth.



A Malavetan woman showing the chipped teeth.

are buried and a stone is planted at the head and foot of the grave. The practice is prevalent among the Kabui Nagas of Assam and also among the Muthuvans, the Ūrālis, the Mannāns, and the Malayarayans of Travancore. The Ūrālis plant a stone not only at the head and foot of the grave, but also on both sides of it. The survival of this custom among the primitive peoples of Assam and Travancore lends support to the theory that there might have been a movement of stone-using people, not only throughout Indonesia as far as Assam, but also through Assam to Cape Comorin.

### *Age of Megalithic Monuments*

Systematic excavation has still to be made by the archæologist in Travancore. Ward and Conner did the earliest of excavations in Travancore. Antiquarians, after careful researches, have been able to divide megalithic monuments into three classes according to their contents.

1. *The Tumuli of the Stone Age* are considered to be the most ancient. They are often of great size and are distinguished by circles of stones and stone chambers in which are found the remains of unburnt bodies with objects of stone and amber. The dolmen opened by Ward and Conner at Chokkanad contained no implement, and probably belonged to the Stone Age. This represents the lowest state of civilization before the introduction of metals.

2. *The Tumuli of the Bronze Age* contain relics of burnt bodies, vessels, and implements and orna-

ments of advanced civilization. Tumuli of this kind are rare in Kerala, but it appears that Mr. Bourdillon once picked up a bronze lamp which probably belonged to one such tumulus.

3. *The Tumuli of the Iron Age* are the most recent and represent a comparatively advanced state of civilization. Iron implements, swords, spear-heads, and highly polished vessels are found in them. In the Cochin State, all the tumuli that have been found appear to be of the Iron Age, while in Travancore there are some that are of even an earlier period as was revealed by the excavations of Ward and Commer.

### *Significance of Dolmens*

Major Munn claims that the dolmen-builders of the Deccan were mining for gold, copper, iron and diamonds. He points out that the two districts where the dolmens are thickest are Bellary and Dharwar, which are riddled with old workings of gold, copper, and iron. The Anjanad valley is the home of a large concentration of dolmens. The spade of the archæologist and the geologist can alone determine what the mineral contents of the soil are in Anjanad. The late Mr. Vincent Ball says that gold-washing, as practised in India, is an example of human degradation. The Gondas of Central India are assiduous gold workers. They still erect miniature dolmens and thus show strong signs of continuity with people of the archaic civilization. The Kurumbas of the Nilgiris are the

chief gold-washers of the Madras Presidency, dating from 500 B. C. The Malayarayans of Travancore, according to Walhouse, make imitation Kistavens of small slabs of stone in the Rāni Reserve forests, but gold washing is not in evidence. It may have become a forgotten art. The matter requires further investigation.

Megalithic monuments in different parts of the world present such a uniformity of structure that it is hardly compatible with the theory of their independent origin. Montelius focusses attention on the continuous influence of the East on the West from remote pre-historic times. Fergusson thinks that the dolmen builders were Dravidian in origin. Ruggeri strikes a different note and opines that they are Veddaic or Australoid in origin, and between the Mundas of the north and the Veddahs of the south there intervene the Kurumbas, Irulas, the Muthuvans, and the Ūrālis, representing the Pre-Dravidians (Proto-Australoids) who once extended over the whole of India and later came under the influence of the Dravidians and the Aryans. According to Flinders Petrie, the date of the Pre-Dravidian culture is about 2500 B. C. This view is confirmed by Perry who holds that, "all the world over, the dolmens present such similarities of structure that they must have been the work of a people, showing a common culture."\* Beyond Indonesia which includes among other areas Assam and Burma, megalithic monuments are in evidence in the region

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\* G. T. Perry, *Megalithic Culture of Indonesia*.

of the Mundas of Chota Nagpur, the Todas of Nilgris, and the hill-tribes of Travancore. .

### *Conclusion*

Palaeontological evidence also supports the theory of the common origin of megalithic monuments. No skeletal remains have been so far unearthed to bear any direct evidence of the Negrito race in Travancore. "Judged by the nature and contents of objects found, the megalithic remains of the Deccan and South India are said to reveal a uniform culture, and it is considered that the megalithic remains of Southern India are post Vedic and later than any similar remains of the Central Indian Plateau, from where the culture would seem to have spread southwards."\* Two fossil remains have been found in India, the Bayana Cranium and the Sailkot Cranium. Dr. Keith is of opinion that they are of Veddaic type which represents the Pre-Dravidian (Proto-Australoid) people. "The excavations of Mohenjo Daro and Harappa reveal that one of the skulls is Proto-Australoid. A correspondence in type is revealed by one of the South Indian skulls at Adichanallur which is called Proto-Australoid by Elliot Smith. † The physical characteristics observed in the skulls are found among the existing South Indian Tribes and among the Veddahs of Ceylon. "There is a remarkable similarity between these and the skeletons found in the tumuli of Great Britain,

\* Hutton, Census of India. 1931, Vol. I, Part 3, Ethnographical LXV to LXVII.

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France, and Germany, which exhibit features of a dolichocephalic people. Thus the uniformity in the structure of the monuments is marked by a uniformity in the structure of the contained skeletons which belong to a dolichocephalic people.”\*

While Pre-Dravidian is their time-honoured appellation, Dr. Eickstedt would call them Weddid and Dr. Guha, Nishādic. Dr. Hutton has labelled them Proto-Australoid after Sewell. Though the Pre-Dravidian has for long stood the test of time, it is but fitting that the term Proto-Australoid should continue.

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\* Newbingen, *Modern Geography*, pp. 203 to 204.



## CHAPTER V

### DOMESTIC LIFE

#### *Clothing and Decoration*

Primitive man was in a state of nudity, but in the course of progressive evolution, he became subject to a sense of shame which was not naturally in him. This sense of shame which is a by-product of modern civilization became more and more a simple manifestation of the male. Clothing seems to have originated in the decorative impulse. The first and most primitive form of clothing was to cover exposure. As typical of the level which has been referred to as the fig-leaf state of society, there are several tribes in Travancore who have only recently advanced beyond that state. The Malapantārams are a tribe in the hunting stage of civilization. "The barks of trees are their clothing, and rocks, caves, and hollows of trees, their homes."\* Mrs. Evans observed the Malavētans "wearing dresses of leaves."† The Kānikkār call them 'Tolvetans', which is reminiscent of the leafy garment they wore in former times. Jacob Canter Visscher has recorded that "the Ullātans wore no clothing and regarded the tiger as their uncle."‡ The Kānikkār were as nature made them rude with only a semblance of cloth. Rev. Mateer says that "men almost go naked, having only a few

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\* V. Nagamiah, The Travancore State Manual, Vol. II, p. 417.

† Madras Museum Bulletin, Vol. III, No. 1, 1900, Mrs. J. W. Evans, The Malavedars of Travancore, p. 86.

‡ Jacob Canter Visscher, Letters from Malabar, p. 129.





Paliyan woman preparing ragi.

inches of cloth round their loins and a small cloth on the head.”\* The Thantapulaya women formerly wore a thanta garment which covered their front and back. The garment is made of the leaves of a kind of sledge called thanta (*Isolepis articulata*), which are cut into lengths, woven at one end and tied round the waist so that they hang below the knees and cover the front and back. The thanta garment has vanished with missionary influence. “The Nāyādis generally cover their nakedness by tying round the waist low strings of leaves and plants.”† The Vettuvans of North Malabar, the Juangs of Chota Nagpur, the Sakai, and the Jakuns of the Malay Peninsula wear dresses of leaves. Owing to frequent contact with the people of the plains and the influence of the missionaries and work in the plantations, the leafy garment has been discarded.

A German scholar divides the clothing into two types, tropical and arctic. The first of these is based on the waist cloth or girdle which varies between the string of beads and the cloak as two extremes. The Kānikkār of Nedumangad now wear the scantiest of clothing. It consists of an under cloth kept in position by a string tied round the loins. Over this is suspended an apron  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet long and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  feet broad, one free end of which is tucked up into the girdle tightly round the loins. They are better clad where they are in contact with the people of the plains.

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\* Rev. Mateer, *Land of Charity*, 1917, p. 49.

† Padmanabha Menon, K. P. *The History of Kerala*, Vol. III. p. 530.

*Mutilations and Deformations*

Closely connected with clothing are the mutilations and deformations which are intended to serve the purpose of adornment. Among the Malavētans of Travancore is found the most interesting custom of chipping the upper incisor teeth in the form of serrated cones. "On being asked whether they have any tradition about the custom of tooth-filing, they replied that, "it is to distinguish our caste. Our god Chathan will be hungry, if we neglect the custom."\* The operation is done by men for men and women for women. Before chipping, the outer edges of the teeth are smeared with chunnam. It is supposed to make chipping easier. The chipping is done with a small knife or bill-hook. The girl to be operated on rests her head on the lap of a woman who holds it firmly. A third woman takes a small knife and chips away the teeth. The custom is found among the Kadars of the Cochin State, the Malays, and among several tribes in Africa and Australia.

The Kānikkār of Kallar tatoo to enhance personal beauty. The operation is the woman's job. It is done single-handed. With males, tatooing takes the form of a circle, while it is half-moon among women. Lamp-black or charcoal powder of cocoanut shell is mixed up with the breast-milk of the woman. She pricks the skin on the forehead with the needles, and it is painted over the pricked

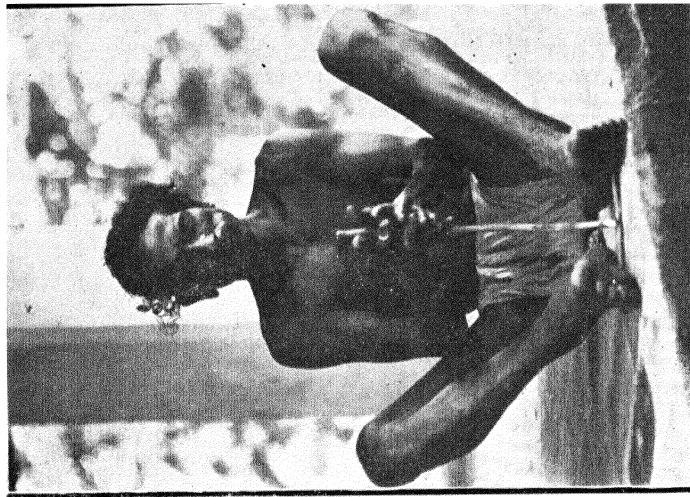
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\* Mrs. J. W. Evans. Madras Museum Bulletin, Vol. III, No. 1, 1900. The Malavedars of Travancore, p. 86.





A Muthuvan making fire by flint and steel.



A Kanikkaran making fire by Hand-drill.

part every alternate day for early healing. Tatooing is found among the Kadars and Malsirs of the Cochin State, and the Todas of the Nilgiris.

The women have dilated ear-lobes among the Mannāns, the Vettuvans, the Malankuravans, the Malayarayans, and others. Ear-tubes of reed or brass are worn. Strings of beads adorn the neck of women.

### *Food-quest*

Food is the urgent and recurrent need of man. It indicates his activities in relation to land at every stage of economic development, fixes the locality for residence, and determines the extent from which maintenance may be drawn, and the duration of residence thereon depends on the food supply. The South Indian hills have still evergreen forests yielding abundance of fruits and tubers, and streamlets with abundance of fish. There are animals for game. The Malapantārams are a small tribe in the hunting stage of civilization. They are found in high forests where the average rainfall is about 180 inches per annum. Owing to the luxuriance of vegetation, they are still within the tyranny of the jungle. They live in families of two or three in a locality. The smaller the number, the easier is the supply of food obtained. They remain for a week in a locality, and then move on to another when the food-supply is exhausted. Each pack has its own jurisdiction for its wandering and food-supply. They do not allow another of their tribe to encroach on their domain. If any



one dares to do so, it shall be at the risk of his life. They may average about one per square mile, and they live on the pith of *Arenga Wightii*, *Caryota urens*, and on *Curcuma augustifolia*. The Pambupulayas (Malsirs) of Anjanad live on snakes, such as python, which they kill dexterously. The Kadars of the Cochin State live on various edible roots and tubers. The Kheriyas, the Birhors of Hazaribagh, and the Irulas of the Nilgiris wander through the jungles, and subsist on yams, honey, and tubers of various kinds. Slender are the ties which fasten them to agriculture.

The Kānikkār, the Malayarayans, the Ūrālis, the Paliyans, the Muthuvans, and the Vishavans are nomadic agriculturists owing to diminution of edible roots and game. They have a clear conception of tribal lands. Agriculture is adopted as an adjunct to the chase. It enables them to live together in one place and accumulate the necessities of life. The tribes on lower elevations have rice as their staple food, while the Malapulayas, the Muthuvans, the Mannāns, and the Paliyans live on rice and ragi. All of them eat the flesh of sambur, jungle squirrel, wild fowl, and black monkey. They also eat crabs, rats, and fish.

The Ūrālis do not drink cow products. As Sir William Crooke says, it may be that they, like the Dravidian tribes of Southern India, regard it as an excrement. The Ullātans do not drink buffalo milk, as they fear that their gods would get annoyed and would not respond to their appeals. There is no taboo against cow's milk. A Kāni-





Urali Tree-House.

kkāran used to vomit and get head-ache if he drank milk. The Muthuvan, the Mannāns, and the Kānikkār have taken to coffee, while tea has become indispensable to the Ūrālis. Living as the Ūrālis, the Mannāns, and the Muthuvans do on high elevation, they are fond of arrack. In the words of Montesque, the prevalence of intoxication in different parts of the earth is proportionate to the cold and humidity of the air. It may be that a gloomy temperament and a cheerless life may induce people to artificial cheerfulness produced by drink.

### *Production of Fire*

The production of food is connected with the production of fire, for which the savages exercise their ingenuity in a variety of ways. Like the Andamanese, the Malapantārams were ignorant of the art of making fire. Tradition has it among the Kānikkār that it was the sage Narada who taught them how to make fire by means of a hand-drill. Sticks of Unnam (*Grewia tiliaefolia*) and *Ixora Coryfolia* are used. A slot  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch deep is made in the centre of the stick. A man keeps it in position under his big toe, takes a round stick of hard wood 18 inches long, holds it on in a vertical position keeping one end of it in the slot, and turns it quickly backwards and forwards with both his hands. A portion of the wood dust produced in the process remains in the slot and the heat generated by friction ignites it. This process was in vogue among the Malavētans and the Ullātans.

The Kānikkār also make fire by the flint and steel method. Pieces of flint and steel and some floss of *Caryota urens* are the materials required. The floss is held near the flint and the latter is stuck with the steel. The friction produces sparks of fire which ignites the floss. This process is resorted to in cold weather. The method of making fire with flint and steel is in vogue among the Muthuvans, the Mannāns, the Malayarayans, and the Vishavans. It has almost died out among the Malapulayas, the Paliyans, the Ullātans, and is known among the Kadars of the Cochin State and the Badagas of the Nilgiris. "The Pulayas knew how to make fire by friction of wood as well as stone."\* Safety matches have now taken their place.

### *Habitations*

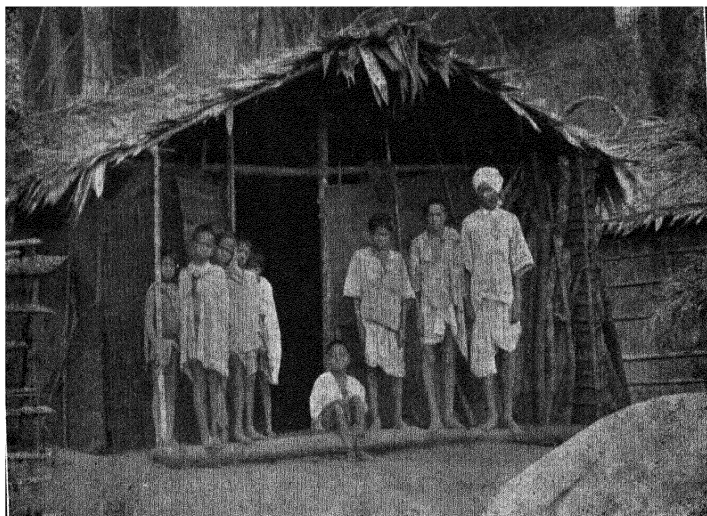
Natural shelters, namely caverns, overhanging rocks, holes in the ground, and hollow trunks may have been the abode of primitive man. The Malapantārams and the Kānikkār may once have occupied them. The Thantapulayas are also called Kuzhipulayas in memory of their having taken shelter in burrows in former times.

The Malapantārams make the simplest of dwellings. They live together in rock-shelters or under break-winds made of junglewood posts and thatched with plantain leaves, which accommodate two persons. The hut is circular and conical, and the

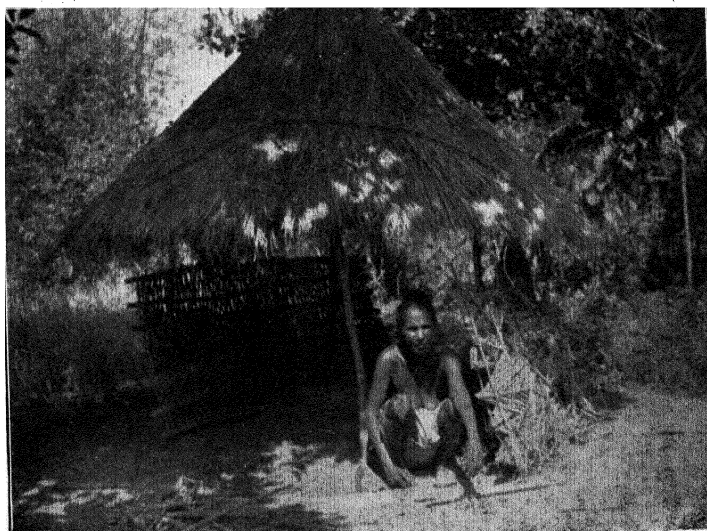
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\* Thurston, *Ethnographic Notes in Southern India*, p. 468.





A Muthuvan Bachelor-Hall.



A Kanapulaya Hut showing seclusion-shed.

floor is on a level with the ground; and has hardly room for a husband, wife, and child. Boys and girls are housed for the night in separate sheds close to the paternal roof. The Chenchus live in caves, and the Birhors put up sheds in the form of low kumbas or raw shelters.

The Kānikkār have a better type of dwelling. The huts are wide apart in some places. Bamboo forms the chief building material. The floor of the hut is on a level with the ground. Tree-houses are found where wild elephants roam about in parts of Klamala Reserve. A single bamboo with the shoots on the sides cut short serves as a ladder. According to Lord Avebury, many savage tribes live in lake dwellings, and the Garos of Assam and the Kānikkār of Travancore are reckoned by him to live in dwellings 8 to 10 feet from the ground, the object being protection from man and wild animals. A survival of this custom was found among the Kānikkār of Mothiramala, where two pile-dwellings were seen by me. Dr. Keane does not attach much importance to pile-dwellings. He does not agree that this custom was peculiar to the backward races. They are more sanitary than the other huts in which they dwell. One feature of the domestic architecture of the lower culture is the institution of the bachelor-hall, where the young men of the community sleep and live. It is an important means of preserving social life. It is found in a conspicuous building in Mothiramala, Chembikunnu, and Kottur. Unmarried girls remain in a hut vacated for them. This practice is also seen among the Muthuvans and the Mannāns.

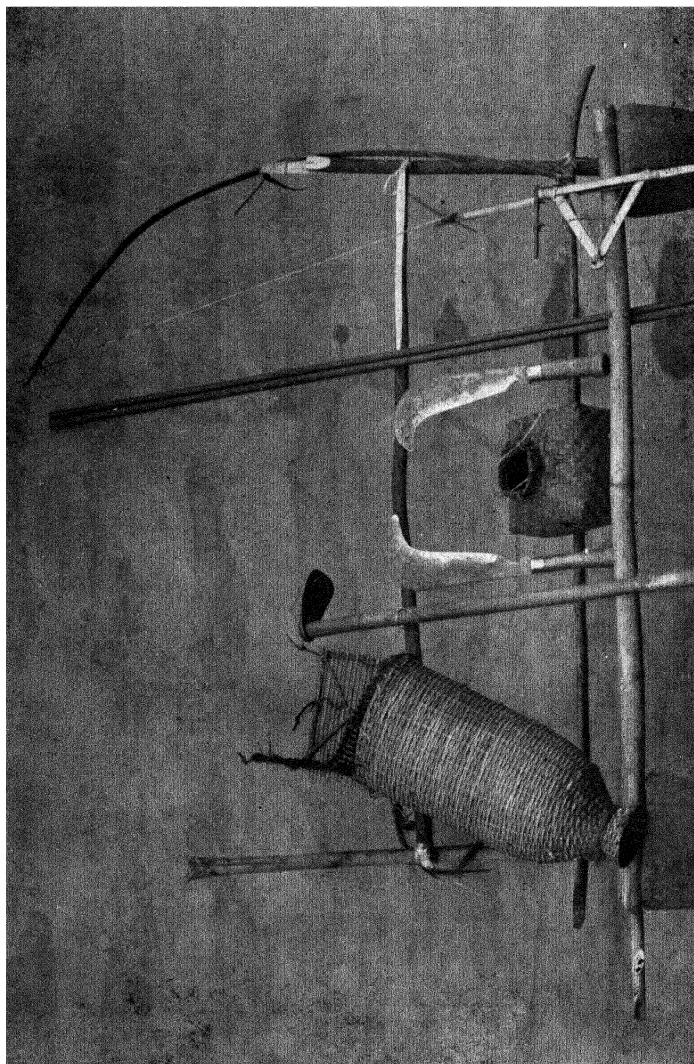


The Muthuvan, the Mannān, and the Paliyan huts are found together in a group, as they are living on higher elevations. The idea of defence is the first motive in the grouping of huts into villages. Each village has a common place of worship, a chavadi for visitors, and separate dormitories for boys and girls. The Ūrāli huts are isolated. Each man has a tree-house which is about 50 feet above ground. They spend their nights in it for fear of elephants. Each hamlet has a common tree-house reserved for women in menses. There is a common tree-house as granary. The huts of the Malayarayan, the Ullātans, and the Malapulayas are of an improved type, as the floor is raised from the ground, and they have mud walling. The Vētans, the Malankuravans, and the Thantapulayas live in miserable huts. The dwellings of the Kanapulayas are neat huts formed of junglewood posts with walls of mud or laterite stones, and thatched with straw. They are generally situated by the side of paddy flats or nestle under trees along their borders. The institution of the bachelor-hall is found among the Porojas of Vizagapatam Agency, the Nagas, the Lusheis, the Andamanese, and others.

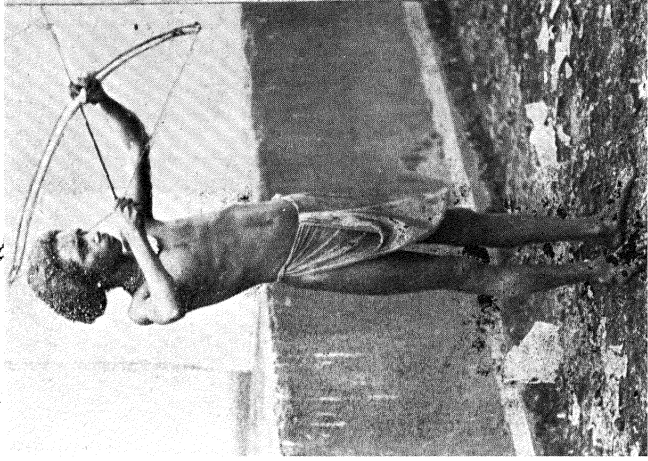
#### *Furniture and Utensils*

The primitive tribes of Travancore live in the region of the bamboo and the reed. These materials are used for a variety of purposes. There is a family likeness among all articles made by tropical peoples and this is accounted for by the

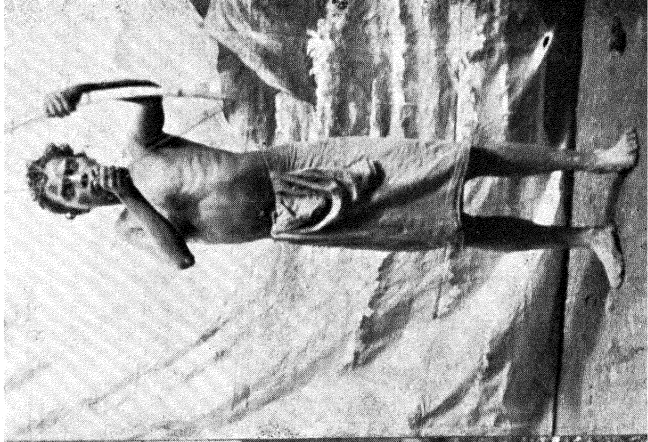




Murthuvan weapons and implements.



A Kanikaran at his bow.



A Kanikaran at his pellet bow.



uniformity of climate and environment. The domestic utensils consist of a few bamboo tubes whose internodes provide them with the necessary bottom, a few cane baskets for keeping grain, and brass vessels among the Malayarayans, the Muthuvans, and the Ūrālis.

### *Weapons and tools*

Primitive man ransacked his environment and got the best out of it which his grade of culture was capable of extracting. His prime necessity was food, and he was more a gatherer than a hunter. This necessitated the use of some weapons. The digging stick is still used by the Malapantāram, the Malavētan, the Vishavan, and others to collect wild roots and tubers. The Kānikkār who have been using the wooden hoe for raking up the soil, and the digging spud, have taken to the use of the axe, bill-hook, and spade.

### *The Bow*

How primitive man developed the bow and arrow is not easily imaginable. It is just possible that it is the invention of the Negrito, as it is found in the Andamans among them where they are in a state of hostile isolation.\* In Travancore, the bow is still used by the Kānikkār, the Muthuvan, the Ūrāli, the Ullātan, and others to kill animals which do damage to their crops. The bow is made of a single stave. It is made of Nara (*Polyalthia fragrans*) or bamboo. The string is made of the

\* Hutton. J. H.. *The Census of India, 1931. I Part I* p. 443.

fibre of the adventitious roots of *Ficus* and is tied to notches at the end of the stave. The arrow is made up of reed. To steady the flight of the arrow, three rows of fowl's feathers are struck into it with gum. They say that their ancestors were a stronger people and that they used to kill bigger animals. They have grown weak, since they took to the use of the gun.

The Kānikkār also use the pellet-bow. They use pellets of stone which are flung with great force. The stave is made of bamboo. It is wider at the centre. It is used for killing small game and for driving away monkeys.

### *Blow-Tube*

The Muthuvans and the Vishavans kill birds by means of the blow-tube. It is made of reed, and is 50 inches long with a diameter of  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch. The dart is 5 inches long pointed at one end and winged at the other. The dart is propelled by the breath and covers a distance of 50 to 75 feet. It is found among the Muthuvans of the Palny Hills and the Malays. Dr. Hutton thinks that there is no possibility at all of these blow-guns having come from the Malay Peninsula, though Mr. Foulkes said that he had seen on the Madras coast blow-guns which were admittedly imported from Malay Peninsula. Dr. Hutton is of opinion that the presence of the blow-gun may possibly be credited to the Proto-Australoid.\* One thing is evident: it occurs wherever larger reeds grow.

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\* Hutton, *Census of India*, 1931, Vol. I, part 1, p. 444.







A Muthuvan blowing his blow-pipe.



A Vishavan spearing fish.



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The Vishavans use the Muppali or three pronged iron for spearing fish. The modern hill-tribes are aware of the use of iron. The Nāyādis collect honey with the aid of a Kothuli. This consists of an iron piece sharp at an end fitted into a wooden handle.

## CHAPTER VI

### EXOGAMY

#### *Introduction*

Sir James Frazer calls Southern India the classic home of exogamy. The social organization of the hill-tribes of Travancore is built on the foundation of exogamy. Primitive peoples attached the greatest importance to the rules of exogamy, and the punishments inflicted for any breach thereof were very severe. The tribe forms the outer circle within which a man must marry. Within the circle there are sub-divisions, and persons belonging to these sub-divisions are prohibited from marrying within the sub-division. They are called exogamous groups or clans. The theory is that members of a clan are descended from the same male ancestor, and are, therefore, related. Hence marriage is not allowed within the clan. The clan may be defined as a unilateral kinship through either parent to the total exclusion of the other.

#### *Malapantāram*

The Malapantārams are the least modified survival of the aboriginal population of Travancore. They have no clan system, but there are two groups among them consisting of three or four families having no distinct names. Each group is exogamous. A man marries the daughter of his maternal uncle or of his father's sister. Thus double cross-cousin marriage is practised.

*Kānikkār*

The Kānikkār of South Travancore have a more highly developed system of exogamous clans than those in Quilon and Shencotta Divisions. In the vicinity of Kulathupuzha, where they have been under more civilizing influences, there are only two clans and they are known as Mūttillom and Mēnillom. The men of each half are obliged to take their wives from the other half. They trace the origin of the clan to the carcase of an elephant. The man who saw the haunches and hind limbs of the carcase belonged to Mūttillom, and he who saw its trunk belonged to Mēnillom. The Kānikkār of the present day claim to be the descendants of these two ancestors. There are four clans among the Kānikkār of Nāravelli in Nedumangad taluq. They are Mūttillom, Mēnillom, Kayyillom, and Pālillom, and all are exogamous. Members of Mūttillom and Mēnillom, considered to be superior to the other clans, intermarry. There is neither intermarriage nor interdining between these and the other two clans. The members of the two inferior clans are not even invited to the marriage ceremonies of the superior clans, and if they attend the ceremonies uninvited, they are fed only after the superior clans have had their feast. In less developed areas of Neyyathumkara Range, there are two distinct divisions or phratries, the Annanthambi phratry and Macchambi phratry. The Annanthambi phratry includes the clans of Mēnillom, Perinchillom, and Kayyillom, and Macchambi phratry, the

clans of Mūttillom, Velanātilom, and Kurumillom. Intermarriage between members of the different clans of the same phratry is prohibited.

Interesting stories are current among the Kānikkār as to the origin of their clans. The ancestors of the Kānikkār of Mothiramala felt an abhorrence to the promiscuous life they led in the past. With a view to evolving order out of this chaotic social condition, Illampalli Muthan and Thiruvānpalli Muthan decided that there should be a dual organization of the Kānikkār, namely, Annanthambi illakkars and Macchambi illakkars. Each division was further sub-divided into five clans, and the Kānikkār of the present day are said to be their descendants.

The Kānikkār of Mankutty have invented a very ingenious story about the origin of the clan system. The story is that a sambur once did great havoc to their crop and the man who shot an arrow at the animal and killed it became Kurmillom. The men who sat on the hedge and saw the incident became Vēlillom and another who watched the fun at a distance, Vēlanātilom. The man who removed the sambur's head became Mūttillom and one who carried the forelimbs, Kayyillom. Another who bundled a small quantity of flesh in leaves which swelled its appearance, belonged to Perimanillom. The man who removed the bowels became Māngotillom, and one who removed the udder of the carcase, Pālamalaillom. Lastly, a man who left a python in water belonged to Perinchillom.

In the hamlets in the vicinity of Kallar in Nedumangad taluq, the clans are known by other names, and the origin of the clan system is said to be different. The Annanthambi phratry includes Vellayillom, Mannatillom, Thumbraillom, Velanātilom, Mūlaikonathillom, and Mūttillom. The Macchambi phratry includes Mēnillom, Patikayillom, Erumbiyāt illom, Pāramala illom, and Pōthōtillom. Regarding the origin of these clans, it is said that once a wild elephant lay dead in the jungle, and that different parts of its carcase were appropriated by different men, from whom originated the different clans. The man who only got the earth where the carcase lay belonged to Mannatillom. One who carried away the genital organ became Thūmbara illom. The man who removed the heart belonged to Vellayillom. The man who got the lion's share of the flesh belonged to Mēnillom. One who got only the ants that swarmed there belonged to Erumbiyāt illom. Mulaikōnath, Patika, and Pothottilloms are named after the places called Mulaikōnam, Patika, and Pōthode. As regards Pāramala illom it is said that a Kānikkār boy and girl were found hiding in a rock cave called Pāramala and they were removed to the nearest hamlet and brought up. The children of the girl belonged to the Pāramala illom. Those who saw and enjoyed all the fun belonged to the Velanāt illom. Dr. Edgar Thurston gives currency to the theory that clans are named after mountains and places such as Pālamala, Thalamala etc. This view is not entirely correct as regards the Kānikkār of the present day.



The system of tracing kinship through the mother is not altogether extinct among the hill-tribes of Travancore. Among the Kānikkār, the children of a man of Kurumillom clan by his wife of Perinchillom clan belong to the latter clan. According to the rules of exogamy, no man is allowed to marry a woman of his own clan. As a woman's children belong to a clan different from that of her brother's children, it follows that these children who are cross-cousins can intermarry according to the rule of exogamy. On the other hand, children of brothers or of sisters belong to the exogamous clan, and cannot therefore intermarry. Though double cross-cousin marriage is permissible, a man generally marries the daughter of his maternal uncle. A child is generally named after a member of the mother's clan, a maternal uncle, an aunt, or maternal grandparent. Scholars, like Sir Henry Maine and M. Fustel De Coulanges, did not recognize the system of female descent and thought that the exogamous clan with male descent was an extension of the patriarchal family which was the original unit of society. The wide distribution of exogamy and the probable priority of matriarchy to patriarchy was first brought into prominence by McLennan.\*. Under the system of female descent, there was no transfer of clanship among the Kānikkār. The children belonged to the mother's clan. With the introduction of male kinship came the practice of transferring a woman from her own clan to that of her husband.

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\* R. V. Russel—The Tribes and Castes of Central Provinces' Vol. I, p. 144.

*Muthuvan*

The Muthuvans of Neriamangalam Range are divided into a number of exogamous clans, such as Mēlakūttom, Kānakūttom, Thūshanikūttom, Puthānikūttom, Kanayāthukūttom, Ellikūttom. Members of Kānakūttom and Mēlakūttom clans consider themselves to be superior to the remaining four clans, and do not intermarry with them.

Mēlakūttom includes the Vākas or chieftains of the Muthuvans. This clan is said to be superior to all the other clans and members of this clan intermarry only with those of the Kānakūttom clan. The members of Thūshanikūttom are also the vassals of the Vāka. They also do manual labour for him. The members of Kanayāthukūttom clan are also vassals of the Vāka, but they enjoy the special privilege of putting up a thatti (elevated seat) for the Vāka to sit on. The members of Ellikūttom have their own Vaka at Kiliparambu. Among the Muthuvans of Poopara, there are only three clans, Thūshani-kūttom, Kanayāthukūttom, and Ellikūttom. The Mēl-Vāka of Mēlakūttom clan is recognized as their chief, and he still receives the fines imposed on delinquents. The Muthuvans of Kūdakad in Anjanad have only two clans, Sūryanayar and Aryanayar, and they are exogamous. They do not recognize the Mēl-Vāka as their chief.

Like those of the Kanikkār of South Travancore, the children of a Muthuvan family belong to the clan of the mother. The husband is responsible for the maintenance of his wife and children.

The debts of children are a charge not on the father but on the maternal uncle, and a man's debts devolve on his nephews (sister's sons). Male children are named after their maternal uncle or grandfather; daughters are named after their maternal grandmother or aunt. A man invariably marries the daughter of his maternal uncle.

### *Vishavans*

The Vishavans of Idyara valley are divided into eight clans:—

- |                  |                |
|------------------|----------------|
| 1. Kunnikkār     | 5. Ponnēyankār |
| 2. Alappankār    | 6. Pēzhātikār  |
| 3. Marungāthukār | 7. Pōkkankār   |
| 4. Thōnnikār     | 8. Krāplikār   |

Sir Herbert Risley classifies the names of exogamous divisions as eponymous, territorial or local, titular and totemistic. The clans of the Vishavans are territorial. They are named after some village in which the members of the clan originally resided. Thus Maringāthukār are those who came from Maringāth. Krāplikār are those who came from Krāpli. Groups of Vishavans occupied parts of the Idyara valley and came to be known by the name of the locality where they lived. Pēzhatikār are said to be indigenous. When they began to decline in numbers, they contracted connections with those in the Cochin State, and these came over and settled in some parts of the Idyara Valley.

The Pēzhatikār and Pōkkankār consider themselves to be superior to the other clans and the

headman is selected from these clans. This superiority does not, however, operate as a bar to intermarriage. The first three clans regard themselves as belonging to one stock and so no intermarriage is allowed among them. But they can intermarry from the remaining five clans. Marriage between cross-cousins is prohibited among them. A man is free to marry any woman outside his clan and has thus a wider choice of a mate. They state that this prohibition is due to the fact that consanguinous marriages are fraught with danger. This is in accord with the views of Westermarck who says that consanguinous marriages are more injurious in savage regions where the struggle for existence is often more severe than they have proved to be in civilized society.

### *Ūrālis*

The Ūrālis of Periyar and Vandamet are divided into eight exogamous clans:—

- |                  |                         |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Kānakūttom    | 5. Enniyarikūttom       |
| 2. Vettikūttom   | 6. Periyilakūttom       |
| 3. Ōnakūttom     | 7. Kodiyarikūttom       |
| 4. Thūriyakūttom | 8. Vayanavar-<br>kūttom |

Among the Ūrālis of Thodupuzha Range, there are only four clans, Kānakūttom, Periyilakūttom, Kodiyarikūttom, and Enniyarikūttom. The Ūrālis of Neriamangalam have the four clans of Vayanavarkūttom, Kānakūttom, Thūriyakūttom, and Periyilakūttom.

There is a fanciful story of the origin of these clans. The man who went trudging in the Kānam (high forest) belonged to Kānakūttom; those who went clearing the way belonged to Vettikūttom; those who went easing themselves on the way belonged to Thūriyakūttom; those who swept away the refuse belonged to Periyilakūttom; those who numbered the cut stumps on the way belonged to Enniyarikūttom, and lastly, those who attended a feast on Onam day belonged to Ōnakūttom. The clans are exogamous and the children belong to the clan of the mother, and are given names after those of the members of the mother's clan.

The solidarity of the clan is evident in a variety of ways. Members of the same clan consider themselves to be brothers and sisters. If a man dies, all the clansmen observe pollution for 16 days in Neriamangalam and 7 days in Thodupuzha. All the clansmen contribute towards the expenses for funeral ceremonies on the 15th and 16th day. If a fine is inflicted on a man for an offence like adultery, the members of the clan collect and pay the fine. Lastly, all the members of a clan help a man with seed and paddy, if he has a poor harvest.

### *Mannāns*

The Mannāns of Mannankandam are divided into two phratries, the Kandathu Burnakudi and Chalugupattu Urukar. The Kandathu Burnakudi, Tekkada Ailavu, Muthuvar Aravakudi, Kandamala Panikudi, and Malakad Panikudi constitute one phratry. The other phratry comprises Muppankad,

Nagamala, Adakad Nagamala, Kodiyan Nagamala, Ambattan Nagamala, and Pannivirayan. The members of a clan in one phratry can marry only a woman from a clan of the other phratry. The Kandathu Burna Kudikars are superior to the members of the other clans. The Ambattan Nagamalakars are barbers and are inferior to others.

In the Poopara Range, two phratries are observed. One phratry includes the clans of Aravakudi, Muppankad Nagamala, Edattupattu Urugaran, Adakad Nagamala, Panniviryan, Muthuvar Aravakudi, and Unangathad Aravakudi. The other phratry includes the clans of Thekkada Ailavu, Rajakad Ailavu, Panikudi, and Malakad Panikudi. In the Periyar Range, there are two exogamous clans, Panikudi and Aravakudi. The Mannāns of Vandamet have the following exogamous clans of Aravankudi, Nattumannankudi, Thoprakudi, Edadankudi, Panikankudi, Uraliyankudi, Maniyaranakudi, Ainakadankudi, Kumblankudi, and Kalkundalkudi. Some of the clans are named after places where they live. A woman retains her clan after marriage. A child follows the clan of the mother.

### *Malayarayan*

The Malayarayans of Central Travancore are divided into six clans. Vala illom are the descendants of a man who presented bangles to the Ambalapuzha chief (Vala means bangle); Enna-illom, of a man who presented oil to the chief (Enna means oil); Mundillom, of a man who presented cloth to the chief (Mundu means cloth); and Pūthāni illom,

of a man who presented flowers to the chief (Puvu means flower). Besides these four, there are also Korangani illom and Panthirayira illom. The first two clans claim superiority over the other. Mundillakars and Pūthāni illakars are Machambi illakars to the members of the first two clans. The last two clans are the lowest in social status.

In the Thodupuzha Range, they are divided into the five clans of Pūthāni illom, Mala illom, Nellipalli illom, Vala illom, and Modalikad illom. To Mala illom belong the descendants of a man who presented garlands to Cheraman Perumal, to Pūthāni illom, of the man who presented flowers; to Nellipalli illom, of the man who presented paddy; to Vala illom, of the man who presented bangles; and to Modalikad, of the man who peered through a hole unnoticed. Vala and Mala illoms are annanthambi or brother illoms, and a man of one of these clans can marry a woman from Nellipalli, Modalikad, and Pūthāni illoms. Modalikad illom is said to be inferior to the other illoms.

A Malayarayan is forbidden to marry a woman of his own clan. A man's children belong to his wife's clan, and they are named after the maternal grandparent, uncle or aunt. The tie of clan is as strong as that of blood, since it creates a sense of common obligations and common responsibilities. In the case of the death of a member of a clan in Thodupuzha, all the members of the same clan observe death pollution for sixteen days, no matter in which hamlet they stay. One of the traces of the

old solidarity of the clan exists in the recognition by every member of the clan of his duty to welcome any other member, however unrelated, as his brother.

### *Malavētan*

The Malavētans are divided into five endogamous groups, the Cheruvētan, the Chingannivētan, Elichāthivētan, Tōlvētan, and Valiavētan. The Cheruvētans, who are otherwise known as Vēttuvans, are found in and outside Kumaranperur Reserve of the Rāni Range. They comprise four exogamous clans.

- |                 |                     |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1. Vēnātanillom | 3. Churalayar illom |
| 2. Vendirillom  | 4. Modanādan illom  |

A man is free to marry a woman outside his clan. A woman after marriage continues to be of her own clan and the children belong to her clan.

### *Malankuravan*

The Malankuravan is divided into eight exogamous clans:—

- |                     |                   |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Mēnāti illom     | 5. Thechira illom |
| 2. Kāra illom       | 6. Vayana illom   |
| 3. Kurunthadi illom | 7. Venni illom    |
| 4. Pallikal illom   | 8. Ōn̄thi illom   |

The Mēnāti illakars consider themselves to be superior to the other clans. Men of this clan take wives only from Thechira, Venni, Kurunthadi, Pallikal, and Kara illoms, but not from the other two clans. Marriage within the clan is forbidden. A man



marries the daughter of his maternal uncle, but not the daughter of his father's sister, as she is reckoned to be his sister.

### *Ullātan*

The Ullātans who are found in the jungle are divided into four exogamous clans:—

- |                     |                   |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Kārāñchēri illom | 3. Kāvattu illom  |
| 2. Mādapalli illom  | 4. Perakāla illom |

The illoms take after the names of places. The Kārāñchēri illakars came from Kārāñchēri. The first two clans form brother illoms and are exogamous to the last two clans. A woman retains her clan after marriage, and her children belong to her clan. The father and son are never of the same clan. The clans have suffered extinction among the Ullātans of the low country. Contact with civilized men has dismembered the Ullātan clan system.

### *Pulaya*

The Pulayas have a well developed system of exogamy. The Kanapulayas are divided into two phratries. Vadavathu kuttom, Mampalli kuttom, Cherakat kuttom, and Adu kuttom constitute one phratry, while Paliyana kuttom, Padathi kuttom, Paruthi kuttom, Nedumattathu kuttom, and Nor-kuttu kuttom form the other phratry. A man can only marry a woman in a clan of another phratry. A woman retains her clan after marriage. Children follow the clan of the mother who can take her children with her in case of any quarrel between her and her husband.

*Paraya*

The Minneketti Parayas are divided into the following clans:—

- |                     |                      |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Kānjiram illom   | 7. Konchi illom      |
| 2. Thachan illom    | 8. Kōvani illom      |
| 3. Pōōnjeri illom   | 9. Mylai illom       |
| 4. Pey illom        | 10. Vayyōtan illom   |
| 5. Velli illom      | 11. Cherunātan illom |
| 6. Thazhakara illom | 12. Nedungad illom   |

The Perum Parayan of the Pōōnjeri clan is said to be responsible for the clan division. The Thachan and Pōōnjeri clans are superior to all the other clans. The clans are exogamous and descent is exclusively through the females. The clan names are derived from names of places.

*Views on Exogamy*

The wide distribution of exogamy and the probable priority of female descent to that of male descent were pointed out by McLennan. The relation found to exist between a man and his sister's children among the Muthuvans and the Mannāns may be a survival of the ancient system of *matriarchy*, under which a woman's children belonged to her family, and her husband had no proprietary right or authority over them. Under the system of female kinship, there was no change of clanship after marriage, and both the husband and the wife retained their own clans, and the children belonged to the mother's clan. This is the case among the

Kānikkār, the Muthuvan, the Mannān, the Malayarayan, the Vishavan, the Parayas, the Pulayas, and others. Since the bride is taken to live with her husband wherever his residence may be, the clans are spread all over the area. Their civilization is based on the clan. The idea of the family is said to be a newcomer to the field, and to be struggling with the clan for influence. Its entrance into the social life of the tribe as a patrilineal institution may be accounted for by the rule that on marriage a wife goes to her husband's dwelling and makes her abode there. He does not go to that of her kindred. Again, the woman is generally married by purchase among the Pulayas, the Malankuravans, the Malavētans, and others. The payment of a bride-price transfers to the husband the exclusive possession of the wife, and the right of the children that may be born of the union. But the transfer of the children involves more than their possession and control. It involves the reckoning of descent from the husband and his forefathers instead of from his wife and her forefathers. The primitive tribes of Travancore have not abandoned the old reckoning. All their clans count their descent through the mother. As Hartland puts it, "A clan is a natural mutual aid society".\* Most of the clansmen contribute the funeral expenses of a clansman and observe pollution for sixteen days. "The clan is still the pillar of their social structure". The father as the head of the new institution of the family is recognized

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\* The Frazer Lectures—1922-1932—The Evolution of Kinship by Sidney Hartland, pp. 10-15.

as the ruler of the household. Though the children are his, and remain with him, they do not belong to his clan; and his control over them, even while the mother is part of the household, is overridden by the claims of her clan exercised through her brothers. When a boy is to be married, the uncle plays an important part in the settlement of marriage and the amount of the bride-price to be received or given. The nephew also succeeds to the uncle's property even now among the Muthuvans, the Mannāns, and others. The family was continued through the mother. All rank and property descended through her. "In short, birth sanctified the child".\* Matrimonial descent is now fighting a losing battle. Most of them are becoming patrilineal.

The classificatory system of relationship does not appear to have been affected by the divisions of a community into exogamous clans. The successive division of a community into two, four, and eight exogamous groups seems to have been intended to prevent the marriage of relations of various degrees. The division of a clan into two was adopted for the purpose of preventing the marriage of brothers and sisters. Brothers and sisters belonged to the same clan, and marriage between members of the same clan was tabooed. Under the two clan system, the exchange of sisters became the regular mode of obtaining wives. Among the Vishavans of Idyara Valley and the Ina Pulayas,

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\* The Frazer Lectures—The Evolution of Kinship—An African Study by Sidney Hartland. pp. 10-15.

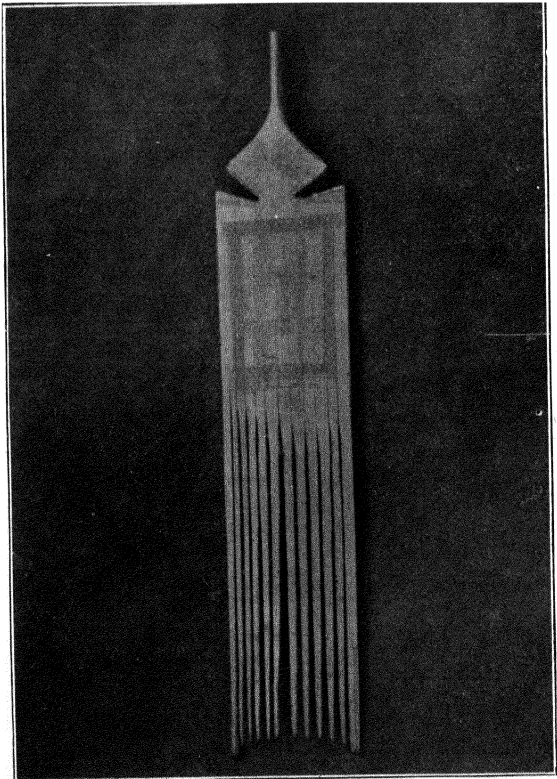
the number of exogamous clans was increased to eight and this was probably done to prevent the marriage of cross-cousins.

Westermarck is of the opinion that the custom of naming the child after the mother is capable of widely different interpretations. "Among savages" he writes, "the tie between mother and child is much stronger than that which binds a child to its father. Moreover in cases of separation, occurring frequently at the lower stages of civilization, the infant children always follow the mother, and so very often, do children more advanced in years. In these circumstances, it is a matter for no wonder if a child takes its name after the mother rather than the father".\* Travancore still furnishes an example of a tribe in the hunting stage of civilization (Malapantāram) among whom children are named after the father and descent is patrilineal.

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\* Ralph De Pomerai—*Marriage, Past, Present and Future*, p. 20





A Muthuvan Bamboo comb.

## CHAPTER VII

### MARRIAGE

#### *Introductory*

Marriage is the joining together of a man and a woman. Before marriage, the sexes are separated by sexual taboo. At marriage they are joined together by the same ideas, worked down to their logical conclusion in reciprocity of relation. Those who were mutually taboo now break the taboo.\* Speaking generally, marriage is the source of the family, the safe-guard of private and public morals, the strength of the nation.† There are everywhere three motives which lead to marriage, mutual sympathy, the desire for progeny, and the necessity for mutual aid in the struggle for existence.‡ Primitive marriage was dictated by the inexorable population need. Travancore is one of the ideal places for the study of primitive marriage institutions.

It was conceived by Bachofen that the first human society lived in promiscuous intercourse and that monogamous marriage was reflected through the matriarchate and the age of the Amazons. "In all uncultured societies, girls and women, who are not married, are under no restrictions as to their sexual relations, and are held to be entirely

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\* A. E. Crawley, *The Mystic Rose*, pp. 287 to 286.

† Calverton, *Sex in Civilization*, p. 231.

‡ Count Keyserling, *The Book of Marriage*, p. 54.



free to dispose of themselves as they please in that respect.”\* The almost universally accepted idea was that the primitive state of mankind was one of primal virtue and moral perfection. Anthropological evidences in India lend themselves to different interpretations. Sir Edward Gait says, “On the other hand, most of the aboriginal tribes, both Dravidian and Mongolian, the low castes in Kashmir and the Punjab Hills, and various low castes in the United Provinces, Central Provinces, Berar, and Southern India allow the utmost freedom between the sexes prior to marriage.”† Sir William Crooke also says that with most of the wild tribes, it is, in fact, a rule that, although prenuptial intercourse is lightly regarded, misconduct with a member of another tribe involves excommunication.‡ Darwin and Spencer declared the improbability of intercourse being ever free, since the passion of jealousy is so strong that it cannot be supposed to be dormant in primitive communities. Briffault says that, “In India it may be said that, wherever the practice of infant marriage has not been adopted, sexual relations between the unmarried are either openly or tacitly recognised. In Burma prenuptial freedom is unrestricted in cultured northern tribes.”§ He however admits that “the aboriginal races of Southern India differ from those of Northern India in that they marry earlier. Consequently, prenuptial licence is not so apparent as in

\* Robert Briffault—*The Mothers*, Vol. II, p. 2

† E. A. Gait—*India Census Report*, 1911, p. 243.

‡ Briffault, *The Mothers*, Vol. II, p. 21.

§ Do. Do. p. 43.

the northern aboriginal races who marry in adult age.”\* My researches in Travancore go to show that there is not a single tribe in which prenuptial intercourse between the sexes is permitted. Some of the hill-tribes like the Muthuvans, the Mannāns, and the Kānikkār go to the extent of taking special precautions to prevent such intercourse. They keep separate dormitories, where unmarried young women sleep at night under the surveillance of an elderly woman.

### *Forms of Marriage*

The form of marriage varied from time to time and from society to society. The earliest form of marriage is marriage by capture. A relic of this custom is found among the Muthuvans and the Mannāns. A peculiar practice among the Muthuvans is that, after the marriage is settled, the bridegroom forcibly takes away the maiden from her mother's house, when she goes out for water or fire-wood, and lives with her separately for a few days in some secluded part of the forest. They then return home, unless they are in the meanwhile, searched for and brought back by their relatives. Among the Mannāns also, it sometimes happens that a woman, if she refuses to return the love of a man, is forcibly taken away by him. They then live together in the forest for ten or twelve days and are searched for and taken to the hamlet. The offence is generally condoned and they are allowed to live as husband and wife. Elopement is also a

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\* Briffault, *The Mothers*, Vol. II, p. 46.

recognised institution among them, and is resorted to if parents object to the union of a man and woman. Marriage by capture is found among the Malayalis of North Arcot, the Mullukurumbans of Wynad, and the Gonds of Central India.

Marriage by service is an earlier form of marriage by purchase. It is prevalent among the Paliyans and the Mannāns. Among them, the bridegroom lives with his future father-in-law for six months to one year, and renders service to him before the marriage is consummated. The same custom is found among the Esquimo, the North-American Indians, and the Siberian peoples. It is a substitute for marriage by purchase, where the purchaser is too poor to pay the bride's price.

Marriage by purchase is the recognised form of marriage not only among the least civilised races, but also among peoples who have reached the higher degree of culture. The bride's price which is generally given to the father goes to meet either wholly or partly the expenses of the marriage. It is found among the Malavētans, the Malankuravans, the Thantapulayas, and the Malapulayas. A portion of it goes to the mother and the maternal uncle and aunt among the Thantapulayas. Sometimes marriage by purchase may not be really so, for the bridal gift may be an expression of goodwill or ability to keep a wife and may serve among the Malavētans and Malankuravans as a protection to the wife against ill-usage, and to the husband against misbehaviour on the part of the wife.

Marriage by exchange of sisters is found among the Ūrālis, Ullātans, the Vishavans, and the Malapantārams. No man can have a wife unless he has a sister whom he can give in exchange. A man cannot purchase a wife from her parents by giving the equivalent in property of some kind. The age of the girl to be given in exchange is of no consideration. Any Ūrāli who has no sister to offer in exchange has to lead a life of single blessedness. This custom prevails among the Madigas of Nilgiris, the Bhotiyas of Almora, and some tribes in Beluchistan.

### *Cousin Marriage*

The marriage of cross-cousins is characteristic of all the tribes except the Vishavans and the Inapulayas. It appears to originate in the simplest of economic motives the wish and necessity to pay for a woman in kind. "Formerly the match between a brother's daughter and sister's son was most common. This is said to be a survival of the matriarchate, when a man's sister's son was his heir."\* Marriage between a man and the daughter of his maternal uncle is prevalent among the Muthuvans, the Mannāns, and the Malankuravans, but marriage with the daughter of his father's sister is prohibited. Marriage between ortho-cousins is tabooed. Among the above mentioned tribes as well as among the Malapantārams, the Malavētans and the Malayarayans, a father desires and claims the marriage of his son with his sister's daughter.

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\* Frazer, *Folklore in the Old Testament*. Vol. II, p. 120.

According to Briffault, the idea of distance and ignorance of the tribe in other localities with whom they can enter into conjugal relations may be another reason. In his opinion, girls are never given in marriage to young men in distant places. This is the case among the primitive tribes of Travancore. Cross-cousin marriage not only keeps the families together, but also prevents disposal of property. In a society where inheritance runs through the females, a father wishes to provide for his son, and generally marries him to his sister's daughter. Outside Travancore, the custom is found among the Irulas, the Kurubas, and other tribes.

### *Monogamy*

Monogamy had its human origin among the poor. Chastity in woman has always been esteemed as a virtue by man, and monogamy has always been a desideratum. Most of the hill-tribes are monogamous, and the family is regarded as the corner-stone of society. Weddings generally take place at night among the Malayarayans, the Malapulayas, the Muthuvans, the Mannāns, the Paliyans, and the Malapantārams. Sight is a method of contagion in primitive science, and the idea coincides with the physiological aversion to see dangerous things, and with sexual shyness, and timidity. Dr. Westermarck's view is that this custom is due to a desire to protect the bride and bridegroom against dangers from above.\*

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\* Crawley, *The Mystic Rose*, p. 296.

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*Polygamy*

“That man is by nature polygamous and woman monogamous is biologic rot and has no more sanction than the Divine right of Kings, and will eventually go into the same discard”\* says Dr. Dorsey. Polygamy marks the end of primitive equality and the disappearance of clan distinctions. It develops in a society where private property is an institution. Polygamy is prevalent among the Muthuvans, the Paliyans, the Kānikkār, the Malayarayans, the Malapulayas and the Pulayas to a limited extent. According to Westermarck, “one factor that influences this form of marriage is the numerical proportion of the number of available males and females. Whenever there is a marked or more or less permanent majority of marriageable women in a savage tribe, polygamy is allowed. At the lower stages of civilization every man endeavours to marry when he has reached puberty and practically every woman gets married”.† Among the Pulayas, the females do not exceed the males. The number of females for every 1000 males is 973 according to the Census of 1931. The real reason for polygamy is then of economic or social character. It contributes a man’s material comfort or increases his wealth through the labour of his wives. It also adds to his social importance, reputation, and authority. Among the western Pulayas, it is said that before a Pulaya dies, he says “Oralum Olakayum Elayakutiyum marumakanu”. By this declaration,

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\* G. A. Dorsey, *Why We Behave Like Human Beings*, p. 437.

† Westermarck, *The Future of marriage in Western Civilization*

the nephew of the Pulaya inherits the mortar and pestle and the youngest wife of his uncle. He keeps his aunt as his wife. This custom has almost died out. Among the Garos, it is said that the nokrong who is usually his sister's son comes to live in his house as the husband of one of his daughters and when he dies marries also his widow.\* Polygamy was widely prevalent among the Ūrālis, among whom marriage is by exchange of sisters. Formerly, a Ūrāli married as many women as he had sisters. The result is unequal distribution of women as wives between the males of the community, the old men having more than the young, who had to go without any. Now polygamy is practised by them to a limited extent. It is a sign of plenty. Only those who can afford it will go in for the luxury of having more than one wife.

### *Polyandry*

According to Westermarek, polyandry depends a great deal on the proportion between male and female population, and polygamy where women constitute the majority in countries unaffected by European civilization. There are more men than women among the Malapulayas, the Malayarayans, the Ūrālis, and the Paliyans. It is said that, where food is abundant, females exceed males. Where food is scarce, males exceed females. This holds good among the above tribes, among whom there are more males than females owing to scarcity of food.

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\* Hodson, T. C, Census Ethnography, 1901-1931, p. 41.

Polyandry is of two kinds, the **matriarchal** where the husbands are not related, and the **fraternal**, where they are brothers or cousins on the father's side. In the case of the former, the husbands are recognized as lovers and lose their privileges at the pleasure of the woman. The matriarchal type is found among the Karavazhi Pulayas, the Plateau Muthuvans, and the Mannāns. Fraternal polyandry merges into monogamy by the steady growth of the rights of the eldest brother. It now exists in a community where motherkin is the rule. This form of polyandry is due to poverty and the desire to avoid large families. It prevails to some extent among the Malayarayan, the Ullātan, the Pāliyan, the Ūrāli, the Southern Pulayas, and the Parayas. Mateer observes that the Ūrālis practised polyandry like the Todas. It is now becoming extinct. Polyandry may be traced to various causes. It may serve to check the increase of population in regions where the number of mouths remain adapted to the number of acres. It keeps family property intact where the husbands are brothers. Poverty and paucity of women may be a combined cause of polyandry.

### *Levirate and Sororate*

The custom of marrying the deceased brother's wife is called levirate. The corresponding custom of marriage of deceased wife's sister is called sororate. The two customs are found complementary among the Ūrālis, the Ullātans, and the Mannāns, while levirate is only practised by the



Malayarayans and the Kānikkār. The Malavētans practise neither levirate nor sororate. Dr. Frazer thinks that the two customs are traceable to a common source in the form of group marriage. Westermarek does not concur with this view.

### *Widow Marriage*

Widow marriage is permitted among the primitive tribes of Travancore. Where widow marriage is allowed, the general rule is that the deceased husband's brother takes her as his wife. This is true of the Kānikkār, the Muthuvans, the Mannāns, and the Ullātans. Marriage with the elder brother of the deceased husband is found to exist among the Malapulayas and the Malayarayans.

### *Pre-puberty Coition*

Pre-puberty coition after marriage is permitted among the Vishavans, the Kānikkār, and the Chīngannivētans. Early coition is believed to be detrimental to health and fecundity. It will weaken the reproductive functions and cause abortion. This is probably one of the causes of the prevalence of abortion among the Kānikkār.

### *Marriage Ceremonies*

Besides the usual exchange of clothes and tying of tali (marriage badge), the commonest of marriage ceremonies is eating and drinking together. The Karavazhi Pulaya bride-groom and bride sit facing east on a mat. Food is served on a leaf in

front. The bridegroom gives a ball of rice to the bride. She in turn gives one to him which he eats. Among the Malapantarams of Pathanapuram, the bride's father joins the right hand of the bride to the left hand of the bridegroom, and says, "I hand over my daughter to you. Take care of her." The couple are seated on a mat when four balls of rice are brought in a leaf by the bridegroom's sister. The bride hands over two balls of rice to the bridegroom who eats them. He then gives two balls of rice to his wife which she eats. This mutual inoculation by food is the strongest of all ties and breaks the most important of sexual taboos, that against eating together. Each gives to the other a part of himself and receives from the other a part of him. This effects union by assimilating the one to the other, so as to produce somewhat of identity of substance. When the act is done, its sacramental character is intensified.\* Again, the rudimentary ceremonies like joining of hands publicly have, according to Malinowski, some inherent force and an importance as sanctions. It is a ceremonial pre-representation of the actual union in marriage, assisting the union by making it safe and making it previously, and, as it were objectively.†

Among the Kānikkār of Kottur, there is a slight variation of this custom. One of the modes of mutual contact is the pressing together of the heads of the pair. The couple are seated on a mat, and rice and curry are served on plantain leaf. Then

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\* Crawley, *The Mystic Rose*, pp. 348.350.

† Do Do Do.

two women take hold of the bride's head and press it seven times against her husband's shoulders. This over, the bridegroom takes a small quantity of rice and curry and puts it seven times into the mouth of his wife.

Among the Malayarayans, the couple are seated on a mat after the usual exchange of cloths and tying of tali. The bride's brother then gives her a betel leaf which she tears into two. She then changes hand and is then asked to give one half to her lover. She then chews one half. They are asked to spit in the same spittoon. The chewing of betel constitutes the essence of marriage. The couple then eat off the same leaf. Among the Jena Kurubas of Coorg there is the exchange of betel leaves and nuts which concludes the nuptials. The chewing of betel leaves by the couple constitutes the essence of marriage among the Minihasas of Celebes and the Balans.

The Muthuvans have another interesting custom. Marriage takes place in the evening in the bride's hut, when the parents of the girl cannot be spectators of the ceremony. The bridegroom presents among other things a comb of golden bamboo to the bride which forms the essential part of the ceremony. It is always worn by a woman above the knotted hair on the back. This custom also prevails among the Mannāns. The wearing of the comb has a wide geographical distribution. It is found among the Kādars of the Cochin State,

the Australians, the Semangs of the Malay Peninsula, the Sakais of Perak, and the Oraons of Chotanagpur. It is a remarkable phenomenon that the distribution of the comb follows the distribution of the bamboo.

### *Adultery*

The chastity of a woman is highly valued. Any breach of chastity used to be very severely punished. Among the Kānikkār of Kulathupuzha, it used to be the custom that, if a man committed adultery, his legs were tied up to a branch of a tree. Straw was spread over the ground and it was smoked. The man's body was swung to and fro and he was given 24 lashes. The woman was given 121 lashes. The Kānikkār of Kottur tie up 101 twigs of tamarind tree into one, and the adulterer is given one lash with it. It is considered equivalent to 101 lashes.

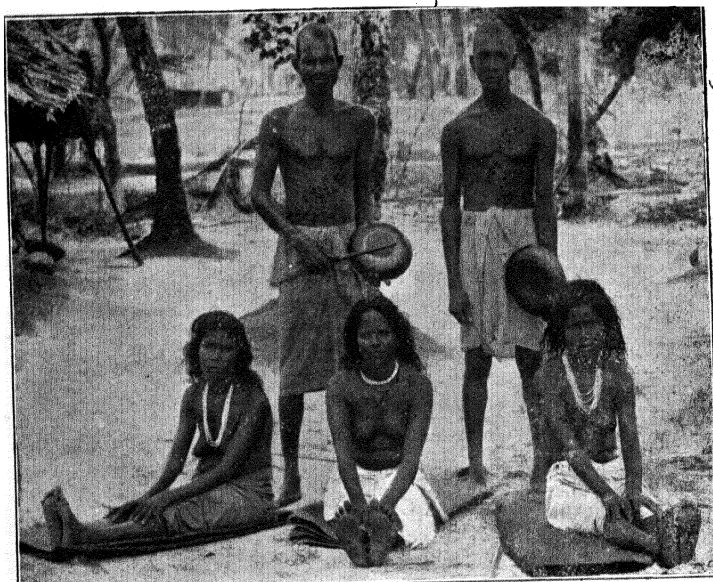
The Malapulayas tie up both the guilty man and woman to a Mullu-Murukku tree (*Erythrina stricta*) which is called Vambumaram. The hands are tied to the tree with fibre. Both are given 12 lashes with a twig of tamarind. If a Paliyan committed incest the offence was heard by the Village Council. The culprit was formerly punished by being kept in stocks for a day. This is now given up. Punishment now takes the form of a fine. The culprits among the Malavētans are beaten and are fined 10 fanams each. The offence is shared by the panchayat of 16 men who restore the woman to her husband. Speaking generally, adultery is

looked upon with abhorrence. Divorce is freely had by man or woman for trivial reasons like incompatibility of temper, sterility and others.

*Influence of Civilization on Sexual Chastity*

Contact with higher culture has proved pernicious to the morality of primitive peoples. Irregular connection between the sexes has, on the whole, exhibited a tendency to increase with the progress of civilization, for it would seem according to Heape, highly probable that the productive power of man has increased with civilization. The Mannāns, the Paliyans, and the Malapulayas have become demoralized by contact with the planting community.





Thantapulaya puberty ceremony.

## CHAPTER VIII

### TABOO

#### *Introductory*

Taboos, according to Freud, are ancient prohibitions which at one time were forced upon a generation of primitive people from without. These prohibitions concerned actions for which there existed a strong desire. This view is not shared by Crawley, as it appears to be improbable ethnologically as it does physiologically.\* Taboo forms the basis of society among the primitive peoples of Travancore. It exists among them in all its pristine strength and forms a good example of the religious character of early society. The primitive conception of danger, so characteristic of early ritual, appears in two forms, the predication of evil influences and the imposition of taboos. These appear with greater force with persons at their sexual crisis, that is, at puberty, during menstrual periods, pregnancy, and after child-birth. All contacts are regarded as contagious. The avoidance of contact is the most prominent feature attached to cases of taboo, when its dangerous character is obvious. In fact, the connotation of 'not to be touched' is the salient feature of taboo all over the world.

#### *Puberty Customs*

At puberty, it is a wide-spread custom that neither sex may see the other. "With the approach of puberty, the sexual question appears, which

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\* Ernest Crawley, *The Mystic Rose*, p. 77.



emphasises the separation, both natural and taboo, and, at the ceremonies of initiation, boys are formally taken away from the mother's sphere and female associations. The danger now enhanced by a new instinct produces the very common custom that from this time boys may not sleep even in the house or with the family. A common form of this custom is the institution of public buildings which combine the features of a dormitory and a club for the use of young men, so that they may not see nor may have any association with females."\* Such dormitories exist among the Muthuvans and the Mannāns, as contact with women is dangerous, causing weakness and effeminacy.

"The motive for the restraints so commonly imposed on girls at puberty is the deeply engrained dread which primitive man entertains of menstrual blood. He fears it at all times, but especially on its first appearance; hence the restrictions under which women lie at their first menstruation are usually more stringent than those which they observe at any subsequent recurrence of the mysterious flow."† The maiden at puberty must not see males nor be seen by them, nor have any association with them, first for their own safety, because it is the male sex in the abstract which causes her trouble and danger, because contagion from them is dangerous, secondly for the safety of the men who by contagion of her accentuated femininity would be injured. It is the dangerous results of the association with the

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\* Ernest Crawley, *The Mystic Rose*, p. 185.

† Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, p. 60.

other sex that are guarded against. To obviate this danger, a girl at puberty is lodged in a seclusion-shed about 100 yards from the main hut for 16 days among the Malapantārams. The period varies from three days among the Muthuvans to four days among the Mannāns, and the Malavētans, seven days among the Malayarayans, the Vishavans, and Malankurayans, fourteen days among the Malapulayas, and 15 days among the Paliyans. The seclusion-shed is about 50 feet from the hut among the Vishavans, and the distance varies to about 100 yards among the Malapantārams.

The Vishavan girl at puberty bathes twice a day unseen by men and then alone is served with food. Elephants and wild animals may damage the crops, if this injunction is broken. The Muthuvan girl at puberty remains beyond the gaze of the men in the seclusion-shed for three days. During day time a Paliyan woman keeps indoors and avoids the sun. She moves freely at night. On the sixteenth day she bathes and returns home with a pan of water on her head. She cooks rice in this pan, which is served to all the women of the hamlet. She is then free from pollution. A Mannān girl at puberty remains in the seclusion-shed for four days. On the fifth day she bathes, and a new cloth is presented to her. She again remains in seclusion for four days at home, so that there may be no harm to anybody.

Among the Ūrālis, when a girl attains puberty, she is lodged in a remote tree-house reserved for the purpose for seven to twelve days, until the

menstrual discharge ceases. If it ceases after seven days, she bathes on the eight day. She then moves on to a second tree-house in the vicinity, and remains there in seclusion for two days. On the third day, she bathes and returns home when seven jack leaf spoons of liquid cowdung and oil are poured over her head by her uncle and brother in front of the hut. According to Crawley, an analogous custom is said to prevail among the Veddas of Travancore,\* but I cannot find any corroboration of this view.

The Thantapulaya girl at puberty remains in the seclusion-shed for fourteen days, when she has to cook her food in a new earthenware vessel. She bathes on the fifteenth day before sunrise when she is made to sit facing east. A medicine-man stands on each side and sings. The girl gets possessed and swings her head backwards and forwards to a tune beaten on a bell-metal vessel. The girl faints after some time. She is then given tender cocoanut water, and recovers. Pollution then ceases. Among the Chīngannivētans pollution lasts for nine days. Ten pots of water are poured over the head of the girl by the aunt both morning and evening. On the tenth day, the girl bathes in a stream and wears a new cloth. She is then taken home, when liquid cowdung is sprinkled over the hut and compound. The girl makes a mark of cowdung on the forehead of all those present, and presents each with a bowl of gruel. Pollution

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\* Ernest Crawley, *The Mystic Rose*, p. 53.

then ceases. When a Paraya girl in North Travancore attains puberty she is lodged in a seclusion-shed for twelve days. During this period she remains indoors. If a man sees her, she is said to become bloodless and emaciated in appearance. If she sees a man, he is said to get black spots on his face. She bathes on the thirteenth day and breaks a cocoanut. Pollution then ceases and she returns home. A few women are feasted.

### *Menstruation*

According to Pliny, the touch of a menstruous woman turned wine into vinegar, blighted crops, killed seedlings, blasted gardens, brought down the fruit from the tree..... The object of secluding women at menstruation is to neutralise the dangerous influences which are supposed to emanate from them at such times.\*

The Malapantārams regard women in menstruation as being in a mysterious religious state which necessitates the imposition of restriction and safeguards. A woman in menstruation remains in a seclusion-shed for seven days. It is about a hundred yards from the hut. Women alone keep company. During this period the husband is forbidden to ascend a hill or climb a tree for gathering honey. He should keep indoors and should not handle any implements. Woe befalls him, if he acts differently. The mode of removing contagion is purification by bathing at the end of the period of pollution. It is said that, when Kattayan's brother was going

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\* Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, p. 606.

with his uncle and three others among whom there was a woman in menses, she was snatched away by a tiger near Achencoil.

The separation of the sexes is most prominent among the Ūrālis of the High Ranges. A woman during monthly periods remains secluded in a tree-house remote from their habitations until discharge ceases. The husband cannot approach the tree-house, but sends her provisions. When discharge ceases, she bathes and goes to a second tree-house in the vicinity. She remains there for two days. On the third day she bathes and goes home.

The separation of the sexes during menstruation is a characteristic feature of all the hill-tribes of Travancore. To the primitive man, menstruous women are dangerous. "The obvious vehicle is contagion of blood. To exclude them from the world so that the dreaded danger shall neither reach them nor spread from them is the object of the taboos which they have to observe. These taboos act as electrical insulators to preserve the spiritual force with which these persons are charged from suffering or inflicting harm by contact with the outer world."\*

### *Child-Birth*

Among the primitive people, the phenomena of birth and disease partake of the mysterious and supernatural, and our ancestors sought to protect themselves from the operation of such contagious forces by a system of isolation and taboo.† Since

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\* Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, p. 223.

† Ralph De Pomrai, *Marriage, Past, Present and Future*, p. 36.

pregnancy and child-birth sometimes cost a woman her life and involve a certain amount of weakness and suffering, they seek to protect themselves from that contagion. Like the Bribri Indians, the Malapantārams regard the pollution of child-birth as much more dangerous than that of menstruation. When a woman feels that the time is approaching, she informs her husband who makes haste to put up a shed for her in a lonely spot about two or three hundred yards away from the hut. Pollution lasts for sixteen days. During this period, her husband cannot do any work. He keeps indoors. He cannot go out for hunting or gathering honey. Chidambaram tells me that, when once his father's brother went out to procure food after his wife's delivery, he was attacked by a bear which bit him on his loin and hand. One Narayanan climbed a tree for gathering honey, but he fell down and collapsed.

At child-birth a woman is taboo among the Ūrālis. When a woman is about to become a mother she goes to the tree-house remote from the habitation. She is not even assisted by women in delivery. They give assistance at a distance. Even after delivery, women do not approach her and render any help. Pollution lasts for twenty-one days. During this period, the husband refrains from doing any work. She bathes on the twenty second day and goes home. The separation of the sexes is prominent during child-birth among the tribes, and a woman is lodged in a seclusion-shed.

When a Paraya woman is about to become a mother, she is confined to a seclusion-shed for sixteen days. During this period, the husband lives on toddy and beaten rice. The Western Pulaya also lives on toddy and beaten rice for ten days and must take no other food. It is said that when a Nāyādi woman is attended by female relations for delivery, her husband massages his own abdomen and prays to the mountain gods for the safe delivery of his wife. He offers his thanks to them as soon as the child is born. This custom is not observed in Travancore.

One of the reasons why the actual birth of a child and menstruation are considered dangerous is that blood is regarded as the life force, it being held that the soul or spirit is in the blood, and as it is believed that, "because of her fertility, a woman is more highly charged with this mystical force than a man, the slightest contact with feminine blood is regarded with utmost horror."\* During menstruation and child-birth, women actually suffer from physical sickness. Hence man will dread being infected with these disabilities.

It may be observed that the main line of development of ritual is from insulation of evil influences to the conciliation of beneficent powers. The dangers feared are insulated during the process of the function as is the natural course, then at the end of the function, the expulsion of the danger is performed for the last time, and is of a purificatory character. The practice of performing

\* Ralph Do Pomerai, *Marriage, Past, Present and Future*, p 37.

the chief ceremony at the end of a functional crisis is more sure of continuance, because the danger is then usually over, and the ceremony cannot be easily discredited.

*Relation of Taboo to Agriculture*

The sway of customs looks more powerful among people in the earlier stages of culture. The Ullātans lead a pure life during the period of early agricultural operations from December to April. Since they remain in the domain of Sāsta and other hill-deities, they abstain from all sexual intercourse. It is said that a man who touched his wife in menses, and went to hoe up the soil, lost his eyes. It is also said that the shadow of such a man falling on a crop in the field will not only blight the crop but also be detrimental to life. Similarly, a woman should not enter the paddy fields after new moon in Karkadagom. Women are not allowed to touch the crop lest their touch should blight it. The Malayarayans also abstain from sexual intercourse from November to January. If a woman in menses goes near the work spot, the yield during the year will be poor. She has to observe seclusion for seven days. The Vēttuvans lead a pure life in March, August, and September, as any action to the contrary will imperil their crops. Among the Ūrālis, a man does not mate with his wife for three days after jungle-clearing is started. Should a man approach a woman before cessation of menses, the crops are blighted and disease does great harm to the village. A Malapantāram avoids sexual intercourse the night previous to his going out a



hunting. The idea seems to be that, while contact with women transmits female weakness, the retention of the secretion in which strength is supposed to reside assures vigour and strength. It is feared that some mishap will arise if this injunction is broken.

The religion of primitive man contains many instances of taboo. The Malapantārams, the most backward of the hill-tribes, take a bath in a stream, if polluted, and then alone go into the jungle. If they fail to bathe they incur the wrath of the gods who punish them with sickness. The idea seems to be that "a man who has been on a journey may have contracted some magic evil from the strangers with whom he has associated. Hence, on returning home, before he is admitted into the society of his tribe and friends, he has to undergo certain purificatory ceremonies."\* Women are excluded from religious worship and festivals among the Malapulayas, and the Paliyans, as they are considered impure. Among the Malapulayas a man refrains from sexual intercourse with his wife for ten days prior to any ceremony performed in honour of any deity. Similarly, as the Malayarayan, the Ullātan, and the Malavētan have to move in the domain of Sāsta and other hill-deities, they refrain from sexual intercourse from January to April. "Man's superstitious fears are found to be in the exact ratio of his ignorance." His whole world swarms with evil beings. Unless propitiated, they endanger the produce of his labours in the field.

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\* Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, p 197.

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Danger is supposed to inhere in the strange and unknown. Every thicket, every watering place, and all rocky places abound with evil spirits. Man needs to walk warily in these circumstances, and he seeks to protect himself by the observance of prohibitions and by making offerings to the spirits.

## CHAPTER IX

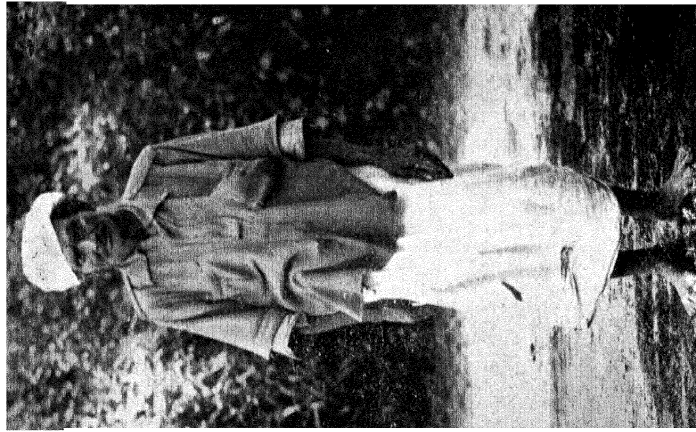
### INHERITANCE AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

#### *Importance of Survival*

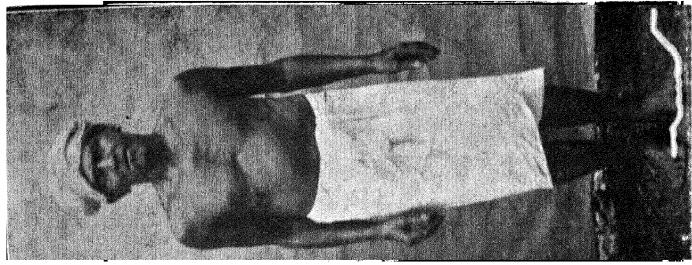
Dr. Tylor postulates that the study of the principles of survival has no small practical importance and that insignificant as multitudes of facts of survival are in themselves, their study is effective for tracing the course of historical development through which alone it is possible to understand their meaning. Following the lead of Dr. Tylor, the British School of anthropologists attach great importance to survivals of mother-right as a means of tracing the development of human institutions, and the accumulation of a large store of facts has led them to conceive that mother-right represents the original state of human society, and that where existing societies are patriarchal, their mother-right has been preceded by an earlier institution on a matrilineal basis. Travancore affords a veritable mine of information, as polyandry of the matriarchal and fraternal type has been prevalent among the Proto-Australoid and Dravidian peoples with its accompanying form of inheritance, the mother-right. It may be said in parenthesis that father-right has been silently replacing mother-right with the impact of fresh culture among the primitive tribes.

The importance of survivals does not receive much attention on the continent of Europe, while they are ignored by the American anthropologists. When maternal descent was first trotted by Bachofen, such a usage implied the former sove-





Mel-Vaka.



Malayayan Headman.

reignty of the female sex. According to Lowie, this belief is now gracing the refuse heaps of anthropological science; and the belief in the universality of mother-right, which has been an article of faith with British scholars, has been seriously questioned except by Morgan, who believed that mother-right has priority to father-right. Tylor relied on such survivals of custom as levirate and couvade for conceiving the idea of universality of mother-right. These data are not, according to Lowie, sufficient to warrant the above view. He thinks that mother-sibs and father-sibs have grown out of sibless organization. Leo Frobenius observes, "that there was a time when in certain parts of the world patriarchal and matriarchal institutions existed separately and were in their own territory the decisive, determining, and motivating cultural factors. At one time the two extensive regions comprising the interior of Asia and the interior of Africa (including Eastern Europe) must have been patriarchal; that is to say, the vast steppe lands were patriarchal. The Mediterranean country and those of southern Asia lying between the two expanses, that is to say, their coasts, were at the same time under matriarchal sway. Patriarchy, in its least modified form, is still prevalent among the Africans of the Steppes."\*

The hypothesis now accepted by the anthropologists is that, among the earliest savages who lived by hunting, the man took his wife to himself, and that the husband, wife, and children all wandered together forming a patriarchal family.

\* Count Keyserling, *The Book of Marriage*, Leo Frobenius, "Marriage and Matriarchy," p. 99.

There was no well-defined system of inheritance among them, as there was nothing to inherit, but the relationship that existed was patriarchal. My researches in Travancore tend to the same view. One section of the Malapantārams, who lead the life of nomadic hunters, affords an example of this earliest form of patriarchy. When the savage passed from the hunting to the agricultural stage, patriarchy developed into matriarchy.

According to Westermarck, the ordinary custom of savages is that the dead man's property is inherited by his own children, if kinship is reckoned through the father, and by his sister's children, if kinship is through the female. The right to inherit a dead man's property was certainly co-extensive with the duty of performing his obsequies and offering sacrifices to his spirit. It is interesting to observe that the nephew is the chief mourner among the Thantapulayas, and he observes pollution for 16 days. The wife and children do not observe any pollution. Inheritance is in the female line among them. It is the same among the Muthuvans and the Mannāns among whom mother-right prevails. Among the Kānikkār the nephew washes the corpse above the waist, and below this region the son washes it. It is a mixture of matriarchy and patriarchy among them, as it is among the Malavētans and the Paliyans. Among the Ūrālīs the nephew is the chief mourner even now, but the children of the dead man inherit the property, because they have been in joint possession of it. The nephew is the chief mourner among the

Nāyādis. He observes pollution for sixteen days, while the son and mother observe it for ten days. Sons now inherit the property. A similar change has come over the Eastern Pulayas.

The evolution of family transformed the system of inheritance of property, but left that of dignity untouched. In every primitive community age is a source of reverence and influence. Considerations of fitness therefore made it desirable to entrust the management of common interests of the family to the eldest and most experienced member, and this has produced collateral inheritance by brothers. Among the Muthuvans a man's property goes to his elder or younger sister's son with the reservation that the property is first enjoyed by his younger brother before it passes to his nephew. Debts are inherited by the nephew as property is. The Mannāns have the same type of inheritance. Outside India, it prevails in Sumatra, where property and rank are enjoyed by brothers, before they pass to sister's children.

### *Inheritance of Widow*

The inheritance of the widow of a deceased man is placed in the same category as property. The claim of the mother to subsistence out of her husband's property makes her remain with her sons. These claims are, according to Starcke, connected with the customs that include her in her brother-in-law's inheritance. A Mannān marries the widow of his deceased brother. Among the Western Pulayas, it is said that before a man dies, he says, "Oralum Olakkayum Anantharavanu."



By this declaration, the nephew of the Pulaya inherits the mortar and pestle, and the youngest wife of his uncle. He keeps his aunt as his wife. This custom has now died out.

McLennan asserts that brother's inheritance both of widow and property occurs, where polyandry has been previously practised, but other anthropologists, like Starcke and Westermarck, dissent from the view. They consider it irrational to seek for causes of connection between a widow and her brother-in-law in polyandry, and the exercise of marital right in a husband's life time would only become a necessary condition if carnal considerations formed the corner-stone in the development of the family. The life and habits of most of the primitive tribes of Travancore do not justify the conclusion, as their customs were not formed under the influence of considerations of enjoyment.

“Man” says Humbolt, “ever connects on from what lies on hand.” The notion of the continuity of customs and civilization embodied in this statement is no barren maxim. To begin with, men lived in families, inheritance being patrilineal. As they grew in size with the growth of tribal feuds, they lived in aggregations, producing patrilineal and matrilineal institutions. American anthropologists believe that father-right evolved without an intermediate stage of mother-right, and that matrilineal peoples imposed their rules on patrilineal peoples. Mother-right exists among some of the primitive tribes of Travancore, but its days are numbered owing to the impact of modern civilization.

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*Social Organization*

The rigidity of the village organization of the primitive tribes is due to their long isolation, their narrow outlook on life, and close inter-marriage for countless generations. They generally live in small groups of families called kudi (village). Each village is even now an independent unit, and consists of an average of ten to fifteen families bound together by the idea of self-protection.

*Malapantāram*

The Malapantārams are in the hunting stage of civilization. Their low economic condition is reflected in their simple organization, which has little cohesion because it must be prepared to break up when its food supplies decrease even a little. The larger the extent of territory necessary for the supply for a given community, the looser the connection between the land and people, and the lower the type of social organization. In Pathanapuram, where they are under more civilizing influences, they have a head-man called Muppan.

*Kānikkār*

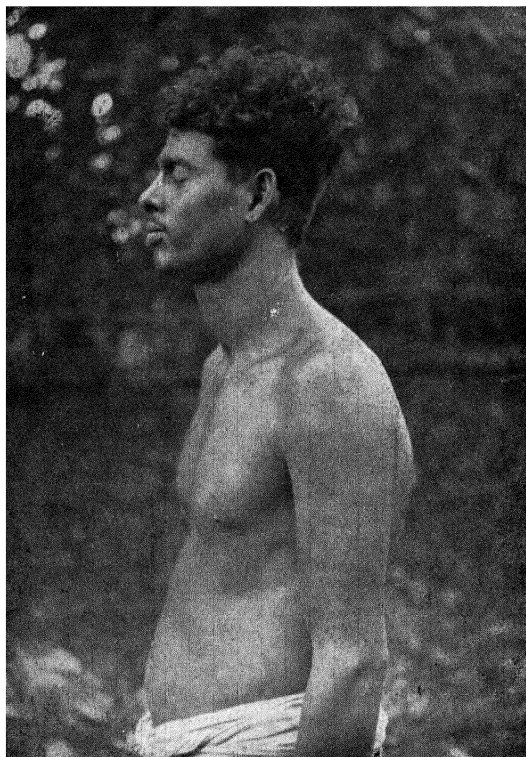
The Kānikkār living in a village are knit together by social, religious, and political ties. The village is the unit in all matters, and there is no room for the play of individualistic tendencies. Villagers work jointly in clearing jungle, burning debris, and in all magico-religious ceremonies performed for securing a bountiful harvest. The headman (Muttukani) used to wield considerable power in the past and settle all their disputes.

*Muthuvan*

The Muthuvans of Neriamangalam have Mēl-Vāka as their chief. Kiliparambu forms his headquarters. He has now nominal jurisdiction over the Muthuvans of Poopara and Anjanad. The jurisdiction of Mēl-Vāka extends over a tract of land covered by Pothiduku in the north, the Cheriar in the south, and Anamudi in the east. Inferior in status to Mēl-Vāka is Mūthākka. Pōrkukudi forms his headquarters. Both the Mēl-Vāka and Mūthākka belong to the same clan, Mēlākūttom. The members of the Ellikuttom clan have their own Vāka, the Valathrāka and Palithrāka who enjoy the same status among them as the Vāka of other Muthuvans. When the village council meets to decide a case of adultery, all the Vākas meet. The Mēl-Vāka has the most elevated seat. The Mūthākka has his seat a little lower. Still lower are the seats for Valathrāka and Pālithrāka. If a fine of Rs. 2-8-0 is inflicted, the Mēl-Vāka gets Rs. 1-8-0 and Mūthākka gets Re. 1-0-0.

On the Cardamom Hills, each village has its own headman. Their supreme lord is Mēl-Vāka. Reference are made to Mūppan, a dignitary lower in rank. If his decision is not satisfactory, the Mēl-Vāka is appealed to, and his decision is final. Under the Mūppan comes the Talayari who exercises jurisdiction over a group of 2 or 3 villages. Then follow the Kularan, and the Sundarapandi who are equivalents of village chiefs. The office is hereditary and descends to the nephew.





Perumparayan.

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*Mannān*

Among the Mannāns, village affairs are regulated by a council of elders with a headman chosen by the villagers. Chieftainship is hereditary and descends to the nephew. The chief has a lieutenant called Rākshasan, and under him there are other dignitaries, known as Valia-Elandari, Elandari, Thandakaran, and Thannipāṭṭa in the order of their rank. Mannāns build huts, cultivate the land, harvest the crops, and store them in tree-houses for their headman. These privileges are shared by Rākshasan and Valia-Elandari.

*Malayarayan*

The Malayarayans have a council of elders to look after their common interests. Ponamban and Panikkan, having equal status, are the main limbs of the council. The office of Ponamban is conferred on a deserving member by the Poonjat chief, and is not hereditary. The office of Panikkan is hereditary, and descends from the father to the eldest son. The headman is responsible for the welfare of the people in his care. Each Ullātan hamlet has a chieftain called Kānikkāran. The office descends from father to son.

*Ūrālis*

The Ūrālis have a headman called Kānikkāran for a group of hamlets. Each hamlet has a plāṭhi or medicine-man who is responsible for the good conduct of the men therein. When disputes arise,

the Plāthi informs the Kānikkāran, who presides over the meeting of the village council and settles the dispute. No fine is inflicted on the delinquents.

### *Paliyan*

The Paliyans have a Kānikkāran (headman) for each hamlet. He is assisted by a Valia Elandari, a Veena-Mariya, and Thandakkaran. The first two are in charge of unmarried boys and girls and are responsible for their good behaviour. The village council discusses and settles any dispute arising in the village. The Malankuravans have a village council presided over by a Ūrāli (headman). The Malavētans have a headman called Stani who settles all their disputes. The office is hereditary and descends from uncle to nephew (sister's son). The Pulayas and Thantapulayas were slaves of the soil till 1854, when they were emancipated. Even now, their condition has not undergone any material improvement. Their masters settle their disputes.

### *Pulaya*

The Kānapulayas have a complete village organization. Public affairs are regulated by an assembly of elders who decide caste disputes and punish delinquents. The Aikara Yajamanan is their recognized leader. Subordinate to him are the Valluvans whose jurisdictions extend over particular villages or desoms. An assembly composed of these heads and chieftains sits in judgment on the erring Pulayas. In addition to these, the landlords under whom they serve as agricultural labourers exercise a good deal of influence in the

settlement of caste disputes. The Valluvan is the headman and priest of the tribe. He prides himself on five privileges:—

1. the long umbrella, *i. e.*, the umbrella with a long handle.
2. the five coloured umbrella.
3. bracelets.
4. long ear-rings.
5. a box for keeping betel leaves.

He is called Vallon or Valiyavan in the Cochin State. He is the supreme judge and law giver and is responsible for the good behaviour of his people. His staff consists of a Kuruppan or Accountant who assists the Valluvan in the discharge of his duties, a Kōmarāttan or devil-dancer, a Kaikaran, a Vadi-kkaran who brings the parties to a suit, keeps order, and inflicts punishment. The Kōmarāttan exists only among the Kānapulayas. We have here a complete picture of village organization on a territorial basis as it existed in the past. It has almost vanished now.

### *Paraya*

The Parayas have a headman called Perum Parayan. He is the master of the ceremonies in times of adversity. He enquires into all caste disputes, and settles them. He has an assistant called Mūnnāman to help him in his work.

Custom was a unifying factor among primitive peoples. But contact with people of the plains destroyed the complex web of customs and institutions



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which made up tribal life. The control of the hill-tribes by the Forest Department has tended to the diminution of the influence and importance of the village chieftains, who are now mere shadows of their former selves. Frequent access to the people of the plains has weakened the taboos and their social solidarity.

## CHAPTER X

### THE DISPOSAL OF THE DEAD

#### *Introductory*

Burial and cremation are the two common methods of disposing of dead bodies. They are very ancient customs and there is evidence to show that both methods were practised in the Vedic period in India. The epithet, 'agnidagdha', according to Macdonell and Keith, applies to the dead who were burnt on a funeral pyre. They also refer to 'paroptah' or 'casting out' and 'uddhitha' or 'exposure of the dead'. They add that burial was not rare in the Rig-Vedic period. In the Vedic period both customs appear in a modified form. A stone is set up between the dead and the living to separate them.\*

Tamil works, such as Manimechalai, Tolkappiam, and Poruladigaram written about the second century, A. D., refer to the following methods of disposing of the dead in Pre-Brahmanic period:—

1. Exposure in an open space to be eaten by Jackals.
2. Cremation.
3. Throwing the corpse into natural pits.
4. Covering the corpse with big earthen jars.
5. Burial.†

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\* D. A. Jackenzie—Indian Myths and Legends—Introduction pp. XXXII to XXXIII.

† M. Srinivasa Iyengar—Tamil Studies. p. 39.

Most of the primitive people of Travancore bury the dead. Burial has for its object the prevention of the ghosts from tormenting the living. The devices intended to prevent the return of malignant spirits are manifold. Among most of the tribes of Travancore, a stone is planted at the head and foot of the grave.

Sometimes, a grave is enclosed with a fence too high for the ghost to cross particularly without a run. Such an enclosure has the additional advantage of marking the place as taboo. This is said to be the origin of the stone circles strewn on the High Ranges of Travancore. Among all the tribes great care is taken over the toilet of the corpse. The dead body is washed and well dressed in new garments, for the dead must enter the spirit world in the best array.

#### *Malapantāram*

The Malapantārams adopt the simplest form of burial. The dead are buried where they die. After burial, the tribe leaves the locality and will never return to it. The Muthuvans bury the dead about a mile from the hamlet. The grave is dug waist-deep for men and breast-deep for women, the reason being that men are brave and free from danger only if the corpse is buried deeper in the ground. The corpse is covered with a new cloth purchased by the son or sister's son, and after it is lowered in the grave, the chakmuk (fire-making apparatus) and the turban are placed by its side. The grave is covered with earth and a small stone is planted at the head and foot. A thatched shed

is erected over it. Pollution lasts for 30 days. In Deviar Valley, the medicine-man imagines that the grave is the body of Surya (sun), and passes a whiff of air through the hollow of his hand. After the grave is covered with earth, he conceives it to be the skin of Surya, and passes another whiff of air through the hollow of his hand. He then imagines that the stone planted at the head is the head of the sun and passes another puff of air through the hollow of his hand. He then imagines that the stone planted at the foot is the big toe of the sun, and passes another puff of air. The idea is that the sun is guarding the dead, and that no wild animal will do any harm to the dead. If these ceremonies are not performed, it is said that the tiger will taste the flesh of the dead and come and kill the people of the village.

### *Ūrāli*

The Ūrālis also bury the dead about a furlong away from the hut. The depth of the grave is about the same as a man's height for men, and woman's height for women. The chief mourner is the nephew who washes and dries the corpse. It is covered with a new cloth. A new cloth is also tied round the loins. It is then placed over a reed mat and tied with Kaivan fibre (*Helicteres Isora*) and carried to the grave. Billets of wood are placed in the pit cross-wise and over them a plaited bamboo is placed. The sides of the grave are also lined with bamboo. The corpse is then lowered into the grave and a plaited bamboo is placed above it. A complete coffin is thus formed. The chewing materials

and bill-book of the deceased are placed in the right arm pit of the deceased. Green leaves are then thrown into the grave and the pit is covered with earth. A stone is placed at the head and another at the feet, and one on each side. Each is about two feet long and one foot broad. The plaited bamboo is used only in the case of males. In the case of a woman dying after delivery in a tree-house, men dig the grave for deceased, but women carry the body to the grave and bury it. It is said that men will get ill and provoke the anger of the gods if they do it.

### *Paliyan*

The Paliyans bury the dead about a mile from the hamlet. The grave is dug breast-deep for women and loin-deep for men. The corpse is placed in the grave on a reed mat and is covered by it. The grave is then filled with earth. The Vishavans adopt a simple form of burial. The grave is about a mile away from the hamlet and is dug in the east to west direction. The corpse is placed on a new mat, tied up, and carried to the grave suspended on a pole. The corpse is laid on its back in the grave, the head being at the western end and the feet at the eastern end of the grave, and the head is propped up so that the face looks eastwards. A bamboo mat is placed over the corpse and the pit is filled with earth.

### *Malayarayan*

The Malayarayans of Central Travancore inter the dead about 20 to 40 yards to the south of the





A Muthuvan temple.

habitation. The eldest son and oldest nephew of the deceased go round the site selected for the burial three times, strewing rice and fried paddy. They then remove three shovels of earth from the site with their face turned away from it. The grave is then dug four feet deep. The grave diggers are not allowed to carry the corpse. Wrapt in a new cloth, the corpse is lowered into the grave. All the mourners then throw earth into the grave three times, standing with their back turned to the corpse, then wheel round and fill the grave with earth. Small pebbles are placed at the sides of the grave and a big stone is placed at the head and at the feet vertically. The Mannāns too bury their dead. The corpse is wrapped in a new cloth purchased by the nephew, and carried to the burial ground on a bier. The grave is dug hip deep in the case of men and not so deep in the case of women. The corpse is lowered into the grave with the head turned towards the south. The grave is filled up with earth and a thatched shed is erected over it to protect it from rain.

### *Ullātan*

The Ullātans bury the dead. The deceased's brother-in-law digs the grave. Before the corpse is removed from the hut, the floor is swept and the sweepings are thrown on the bier to drive away the spirit of the dead. After burial, a stone is planted at the head of the corpse. The Malapulayas also bury the dead and plant a stone at the head, the breast, and the feet.



*Kānikkār*

The Kānikkār living on the northern side of the Kothayar bury the dead. Formerly, burial was done at a distance, but it is now done about 50 yards from the hut. Burial is resorted to with a view to avoiding the terror felt by the living for the spirit of the dead and the fear that it may return to alarm the surviving fellow-tribesmen. The medicine-man gives holy ash to the grave-diggers before they go to dig the grave, and they put a mark on the forehead to ward off evil spirits. Otherwise they may be prevented from digging the grave. Meanwhile the nephew washes the corpse above the waist, and the son washes it below this region. Ganja, betel, and tobacco are put into the mouth of the corpse to appease the soul of the departed. A mat is spread over the grave. The nephew and the son carry the corpse to the grave. It is taken round it three times and gently lowered into it. The grave is then filled up with earth by the son and the nephew.

The wife plays an important part in the funeral ceremony among the Kānikkār of Kottur. She accompanies the corpse to the grave with a dishful of rice gruel, a spoon, and a sieve. As soon as the corpse is lowered into the grave and covered with earth, she comes forward and deposits the articles at the feet of the corpse. A thorn of *Smilax Zeylanica* is pinned to the grave one at each end and one in the middle. The thorn is intended to cow down the spirit of the dead. In the vicinity of Kulathupuzha

three stones are planted, one at the head, one at the feet, and one in the middle. By the side of each stone is planted a thorn of *Smilax Zeylanica*. Some beaten rice, fruits, fried rice, pan chew, and water are laid by the grave near the feet for the spirit of the departed. Two feet away from the grave, the way is closed on their return by drawing three lines over which three pebbles are laid on each line.\* Three thorns are planted over another line to prevent other spirits from going to the grave and snatching away the spirit of the deceased. The above precautions coupled with chants are intended to suppress the vagrant tendencies of the dead. Early man thinks that it is the corpse that may come back and harm the survivors and that it should be kept down by physical means. The Kānikkār to the south of the Kōthayar cremate their dead.

The Malavētans bury the dead about a mile from their habitation. Before removing the corpse from the hut, the floor is swept and the sweepings and the broom are placed on the bier to drive away the spirit of the deceased from the house. The son and the nephew are the chief mourners. After bathing, all the mourners make a mark on their foreheads with cowdung paste. The Thantapulayas used to bury the dead, but they have now begun to cremate them. The nephew is the chief mourner and he observes pollution for sixteen days. The wife and children observe no pollution. In case the nephew fails to perform the ceremony, the son performs it, but observes no pollution.

The Nāyādis bury their dead. The nephew is the chief mourner. Pollution is for sixteen days for the nephew, and ten days for the son and mother. On the tenth day a quarter measure of rice is cooked, and three balls of rice are placed on a leaf over the feet of the dead at the burial ground. The nephew claps his hands thrice; crows then fly over the spot and eat the balls. The chief mourner then returns home after bathing, when a feast is given to relations.

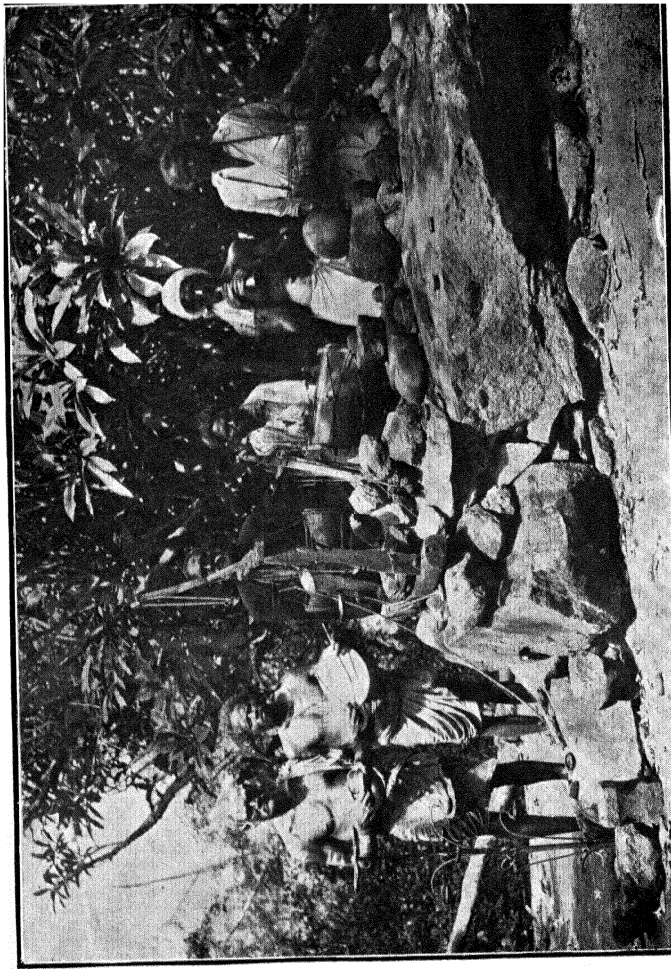
### *Conclusion*

An examination of the funeral ceremonies of the tribes shows that perfect pandemonium centres round the corpse.\* Great importance is attached to the proper disposal of the dead. The idea is that the dead would walk unless the body is disposed of with appropriate ceremony. If there is no propitiation, the restless spirit of the deceased will walk among them and bring sickness, want, and ravages of wild animals. The attention bestowed on them sprang not so much from affection as from the fears of the survivors. The dead are buried with all the paraphernalia which belonged to them in life. Everything belonging to the dead was put out of sight and buried with him, for it was feared that a man's personality haunts over his possessions after death. All the tribes lead a pure life during the period of pollution, and refrain from sexual intercourse, ordinary work, and amusements.

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\* Farnell, *Evolution of Religion* p. 104





A Malapulaya temple.

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According to Bendon, the universal attitude towards the corpse is mystical and supernatural, and to the relations of the dead, a separation from it is alarming.\* According to Thotwell, the potency of the mysterious is the fundamental historical basis of all religion.†

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\* Bendon, E., *Death Customs*, p. 84.

† Thotwell. *The Religious Revolution of the Day*, pp. 111-112.

## CHAPTER XI

### RELIGION

#### *Definition of Religion*

Westermarck defines religion as “a belief in, and a respectful attitude towards, a supernatural being on whom man feels dependent, and to whose will he makes an appeal in his worship.”\* With primitive man, “religion is a part of his custom. It is his whole custom.”† The religion of the primitive tribes of Travancore may be described as a system of animism or spiritism, and their attitude to the supernatural is one of reverential fear in the presence of certain mysterious supernatural powers and beings who must be propitiated or conciliated to avert ill-will.

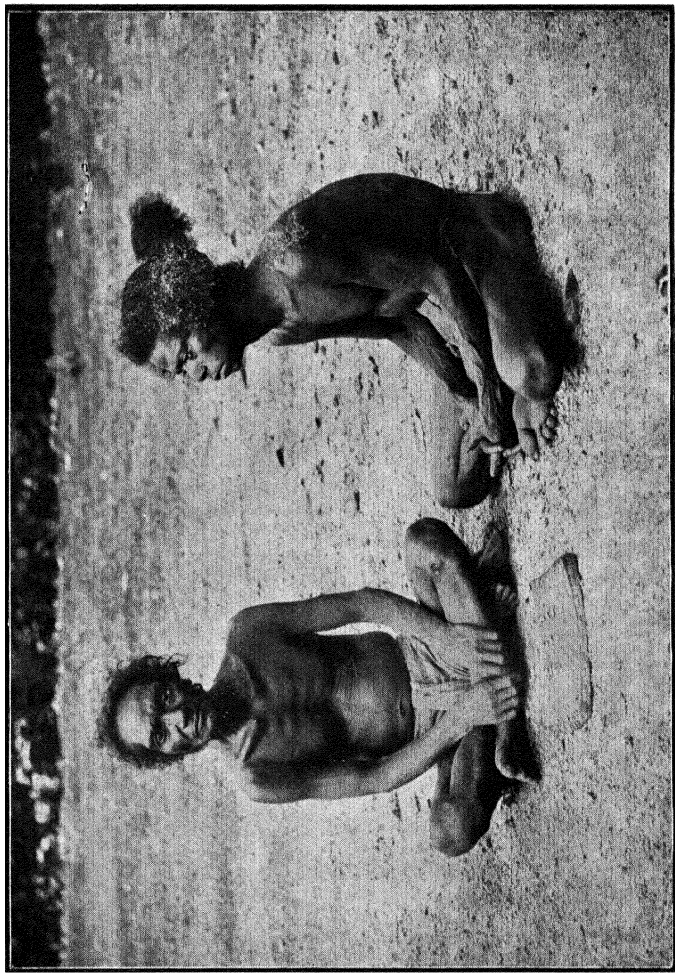
The theory of animism divides itself into two great dogmas forming parts of one consistent doctrine, first, concerning souls of individual creatures capable of continual existence after the death or destruction of the body; secondly, concerning other spirits upwards to the rank of deities.‡ Animism in its fullest development includes the belief in souls, in a future, and in controlling deities and subordinate spirits, these doctrines practically resulting in some kind of active worship. The concept of personality is fluid and vague. No images of spirits are made, and there are no temples.

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\* Westermarck—*The Origin and Development of Moral ideas*, Vol. II, P.

† Marett—*Anthropology*, p. 213.

‡ Risley—*The People of India*, p. 222.



A Kanikaran divining cause of malady with stones.





As for the village deities, one or more groves constitute their shrine. Stones are employed as symbols of deities among the Malayarayans.

The village priest is generally the headman who attends to the propitiation of village deities and spirits. The office is hereditary, the nephew succeeding to it. While it is the headman who officiates as priest among most of the tribes, there is a *plāthi* or medicine-man among the *Kānikkār* and the *Ūrālis* who cures all ailments and practises the black art. Propitiation is congregational and is intended to restore man's confidence, when shaken by crises. Harmonious relations are maintained by supplications, prayers, offerings and sacrifices. The community as a whole, represented by the village elders, constitute the priesthood for the propitiations of the deities and spirits, although the headman conducts the rites. The elders are the recognised custodians of tribal traditions and customs. The ideal of their life is to live on friendly terms with the gods and spirits, to possess sufficient lands, crops, and cattle, to be free from debt, and to have enough to eat and live.

The hill-tribes of Travancore have a hierarchy of deities and spirits:—

1. The Sun.
2. The Ancestor Spirits.
3. Village deities and Spirits.
4. Hunting deities.
5. Tramp spirits.

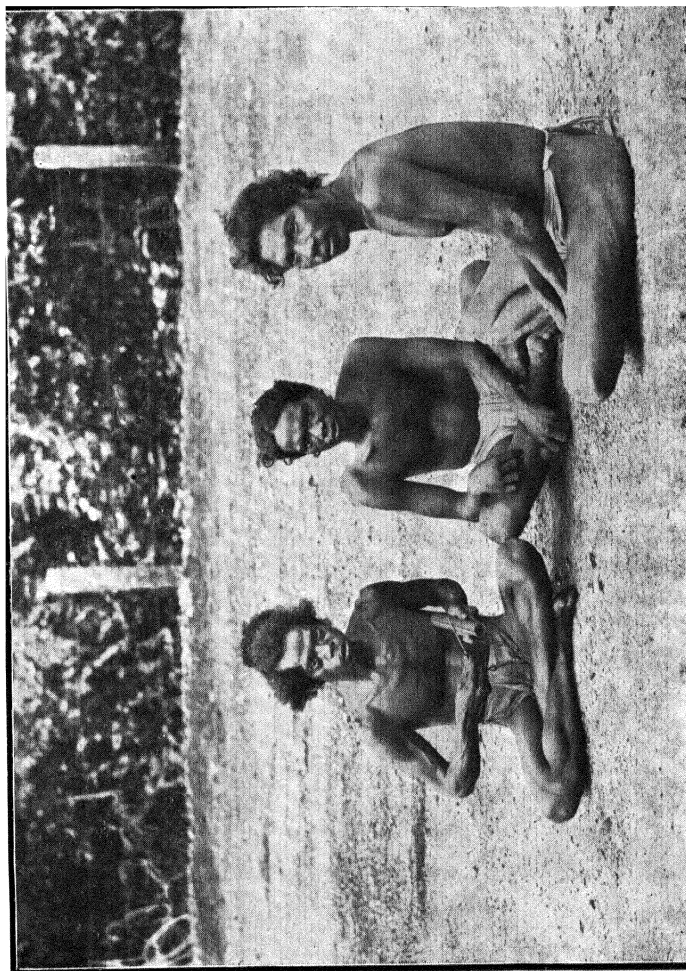
### *The Sun*

The worship of the sun is confined to the Muthuvans, the Ūrālis, and the Kānikkār. Every Muthuvan worships it in the early morning daily by raising his hand to his face. It is probable that the worship of the sun may have at one time formed a prominent part of their religion. The Ūrālis recognize the sun as the creator of the universe and the father of all souls. The Kānikkār call the sun Bhagavan of all and reckon it as a female. Early at sunrise, they place in front of their huts a lighted lamp, fruits, beaten and fried rice. They then pray:—"Oh Gods, pray accept our offerings." They then partake of the offerings.

### *Ancestor Spirits*

Ancestor-worship is one of the great branches of the religion of mankind. In India, it comes to the surface in all directions, and its principles keep up the social relations of the living world. According to Tylor, the dead ancestor, now passed as deity, goes on protecting his family and receiving suit from them as of old. Ancestors are therefore considered as kindly patron spirits, at least to their own kinsfolk and worshippers.

Ancestor-worship is prevalent among most of the primitive tribes of Travancore. Among the Malayarayans of Central Travancore appear wide and deep traces of a surviving cult of ancestors. In the region of the Malayarayans, "there are many ancient tumuli in these hills, evidently graves of



A Kanikaran at his Kokra.

1906



chiefs, showing just the same fragments of pottery, brass-figures, iron weapons as are found in other similar places. These tumuli are often surrounded with long splintered pieces of granite from 8 to 12 or 15 feet in length set on end with sacrificial altars and other remains, evidently centuries old. Numerous vaults called Pandukuri are seen in all their hills. They stand north to south, the circular opening being to the south; a round stone is fitted to the aperture with another acting as a long lever to prevent its falling out; the sides, as also the stones at the top and bottom, are single slabs. To this day, the Arayans make similar little cells of pieces of stone, the whole forming a box a few inches square; and on the death of a member of a family, the spirit is supposed to pass, as the body is being buried, into a brass or silver image, which is shut in this vault: if the parties are poor, an oblong stone suffices. A few offerings of milk, rice, toddy, and ghee are made. A torch is lighted and extinguished, the figure placed inside the cell, and the covering stone hastily placed on; then all leave. On the anniversary day, similar offerings are made, the stone is lifted off and again hastily closed. No one ventures to touch the cells at any other time.\* The Malayarayans of the present day do not erect dolmens over the dead. Ancestor-worship is now confined to persons who are killed by a tiger or wild elephant, or who meet with an unnatural death. A metallic effigy continues to be made in the case of

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\* *Matcer, Native Life in Travancore*, pp. 74—75.

unnatural deaths. A small box of stone is made of verticals and capstone opened in front on ceremonial days.

Among the Kānikkār, ancestor-spirits are legion. Sangam Perumal Muthan, Nīlambi Muthan, Muthāla Muthan, and Echa Muthan and others make up 101 spirits of ancestors. When a man is terrified by wild animals like bears or wild elephants, he at once comes back and solicits the aid of the medicine-man, who takes some small pebbles and places five stones in a row in honour of Ganapathi. He then holds some pebbles in his right hand and drops them in pairs into his left hand to ascertain whether Echa Muthan is responsible for the incident. If an even number remains in the right hand, the same process is repeated to ascertain whether Pulichavu is responsible. In this manner is found out the true spirit responsible for the incident. These spirits are propitiated by offerings to Pulichavu, Anachavu, and Pambuchavu to intercede on behalf of the terrified man and save his children.

The Muthuvans make offerings to ancestors in January. A pongal is offered by the side of clothes, beads, rings, and bangles. Clothes are to propitiate male ancestors, and bangles and beads, female ancestors. The prayer is to the effect, "Oh parents, grandparents, and great grand parents, protect us. We shall propitiate you every year." Among the Vishavans, intoxicants and stimulants are objects of veneration, besides cooked and fried rice. The deification of drink is due to its exhilarating and



A miniature Dolmen of the Malayarayan.





invigorating effects. The dead still receive worship from the larger half of mankind. Spencer and Grant think that the worship of the dead is at the root of every religion. The spirits of the dead are worshipped, because they are capable of influencing the welfare of the living in a mysterious manner.

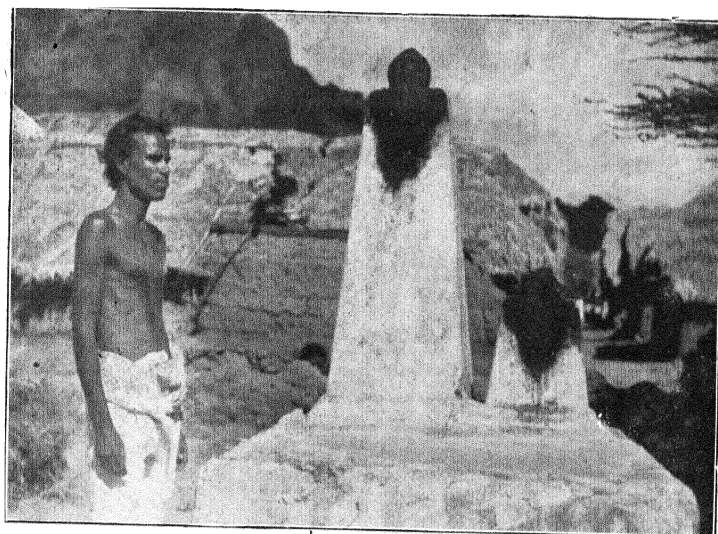
### *Village Deities and Spirits*

Men distinguish two classes of phenomena, natural and supernatural, between the phenomena they are familiar with, and in consequence ascribe to natural causes, and the other phenomena which seem to them unfamiliar, mysterious, and therefore supposed to spring from causes of a supernatural character. We meet with this distinction at the lower stages of culture known to us as well as higher stages. Mystery is the essential characteristic of super-natural beings.

The worship of the spirits of particular local hills or other awe-inspiring natural objects falls under this category. The existence of an in-dwelling spirit, is dimly recognized, and in others, an immanent power of mysterious energy of the nature of mana is believed to exist. The worship of this class of supernatural powers is said to stand between religion and magic. The Malayarayans worship four eminences, Thalapāramala, Āzhamala, Puthiamala, and Savampāramala. They do not separate the spirit from the matter, but adore the thing in its totality as a divine being. The Ullātans also

make an annual offering to Thalapāramala, Udumparamala, and Chakkipāramala. The offering consists of fruits, beaten rice, milk, sugar, and molasses, and is made on the hills. They believe that it is due to the help that they receive from them, that they are able to live in the jungle without molestation. The Malapantārams dread the jungle deities. If a man gets polluted, he bathes and then alone, goes into the jungle. Those at Thalapāra worship crests of hills, Kōtangi, Vēttamala, Kōttamala, and Muthanmala. They make a respectful bow when they pass by them and say, "Oh Hill, save us from mishaps." The Muthuvans, the Paliyans, and the Malankuravans make offerings to eminences. We find a replica of this custom in all parts of the world. Among the American Indians, Dorman points out that remarkable features in natural scenery or dangerous places become objects of superstitious regard and veneration, because they are supposed to be the abode of gods. A high mountain or an isolated peak is looked upon with superstitious respect and propitiated with offerings.

Among the Sāmbavars of South Travancore it is to the village deity that the whole body of villagers turn for help, when pestilence, famine, or cattle disease make their appearance. The main function of the village deity is the guardianship of the village. The leading principle is the worship of the female principle in nature. All over South India the village deities are mostly female, but some of them have male attendants who are supposed to guard the shrine and carry out the commands of



Madan.



their goddesses. The chief ministrants are drawn from the villagers. They were formerly worshipped with animal sacrifices. There is no ecclesiastical calendar regulating the forms of worship of village deities or festivals. Where there is a shrine in a hamlet, offerings of rice, fruits, and flowers are made by villagers. In many places, offerings are more usual after harvest. Sacrifices are made whenever there is an epidemic.

### *Hunting Spirits*

When a party of Muthuvans return with the spoils of the chase, the carcase is suspended over fire for the removal of hair. In the case of black-monkey, its liver, hands, and feet are cut into slices separately. They are then pierced by five thin stakes, and roasted by being suspended over fire, after which they are placed over a leaf. The following prayer is then offered:—"Just as my parents, grandparents, and their ancestors went in quest of food and lived by the spoils of the game, I wish the same luck for myself. If I am blessed, I shall offer you a share of the spoils before they are tasted by anybody else." The slices are then distributed among those present. The remaining portion is then divided equally among all the village folk. The Kānikkār also propitiate the hunting spirits, Sankaramalla Muthan, Pulichavu, Patanaya Muthan, before they go out hunting. When an animal is killed, the skin is first peeled off. The heart and lungs are cut into slices, roasted in the fire, and then placed on leaves. They then pray

as follows:—"When we go into the jungle, pray let us have game easily. If you do not kill and give them to us, we will conclude that there are no Muthans." The slices are then eaten by those who are present. The remaining flesh is divided equally among all the village folk. An analagous custom is found among the Ullātans of Travancore and the Oraons of Chota Nagpur.

### *Tramp Spirits*

Tramp spirits include mischievous spirits of persons who died an unnatural death. Pandārachavu, Arutalichavu, Nāyāt Aruvala, and Murthi are some of the tramp spirits of the Ullatans. An offering of fried rice, flesh of Sambar, fowl, arrack, and toddy is made in front of the yard of a person obsessed by such a spirit. The priest goes into a trance and holds the tuft of the afflicted person, who also goes into a trance. The priest exclaims, "I shall leave this person." All then partake of the offerings.

Among the Malayarayans, a metal effigy is made of a person who has met an unnatural death. A small box of stone is made of verticals and a cap-stone. The metal image is placed inside it. It is worshipped on Sankramam days in Vrishigam and Medam annually.

Startling events are ascribed to the activity not only of visible but of invisible supernatural agents; sudden or strange diseases are at the lower stages of culture commonly supposed to be occasioned by a supernatural being, which has taken







A Kanikkar paddy flat at Nedumangad.



Terraced cultivation of the Muthuvan in Anjanad.

up its abode in the sick person's body or otherwise sent the disease. The Muthuvans are worshippers of malevolent deities like Karuppu, Mariamma, and Kāli, whose business it is to bring drought, disease, and death. They are propitiated to protect the people from smallpox. The priest may be a woman at times.

### *Influence of Hinduism*

Hinduism may be defined as animism more or less transformed by philosophy, or to condense the definition, as magic tempered by metaphysics. According to Lyall, Hinduism may be roughly described as the religion of all the people who accept the Brahmanic Scriptures.\* The Muthuvans show signs of Hinduism in their religion. They worship god Subramania. In each village is a thatched shed put up away from the habitations. Inside is a bamboo thatty, over which are placed a cane and a bundle of peacock's feather. These are emblematic of god Subramania, who is also known as Palani-andavar. The Malayarayans, the Mannāns, and the Kānikkār have modified their animistic practices in the direction of orthodox Hinduism. It is a very interesting fact that all the hill-tribes worship Sāsta, whose worship betrays many features of animistic practices.

On their march to Sabarimala, votaries of Sāsta offer fried rice and molasses to the crags on the bed of the Peruthode stream, which are

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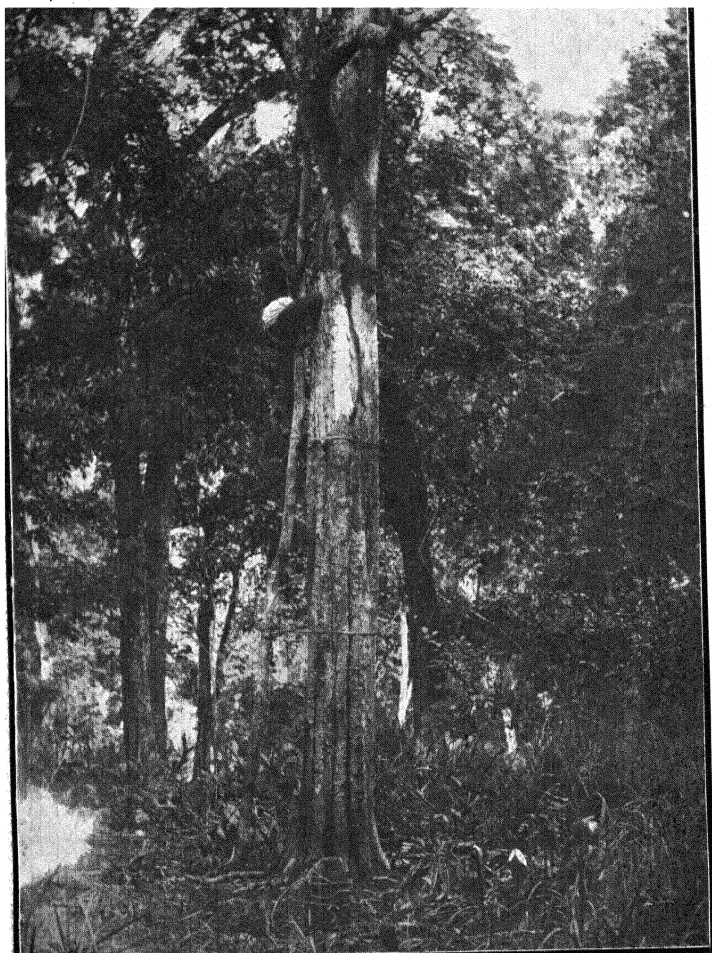
\* Risley—The People of India p. 283

supposed to be the resting places of Sāsta and his followers. Another custom refers to the worship of all stones on the way from Kōttapadi to Sabarimala. The natural object is worshipped, because it is believed to possess supernatural power, but it is never the less the object itself that is worshipped. In other words, they do not separate the spirit from the matter, but adore the thing in its totality as a divine being.

On reaching the Azhutha river, the votaries camp there for the night. The river is worshipped as a deity, which fills their imagination and receives their homage. At Kallidamkunnu, all the Kanni Ayyappans throw a pebble on the crest of the hill. This is intended to press down the personality of an Asura who haunts the hills so that he may not come out and do harm to them. The animist who endows an inanimate object with a soul regards the visible thing itself as its body. He finds it easier to worship a material thing which may be seen than a hidden God, however perfect its shape.

According to Robert Briffault, the function of primitive religion is much more direct, concrete, and practical. Its purpose is not to interpret life, but to obtain those things which are reckoned needful to its existence.





A Malapantaram climbing a tree for gathering honey.

## CHAPTER XII

### OCCUPATION AND CLASH OF CULTURE

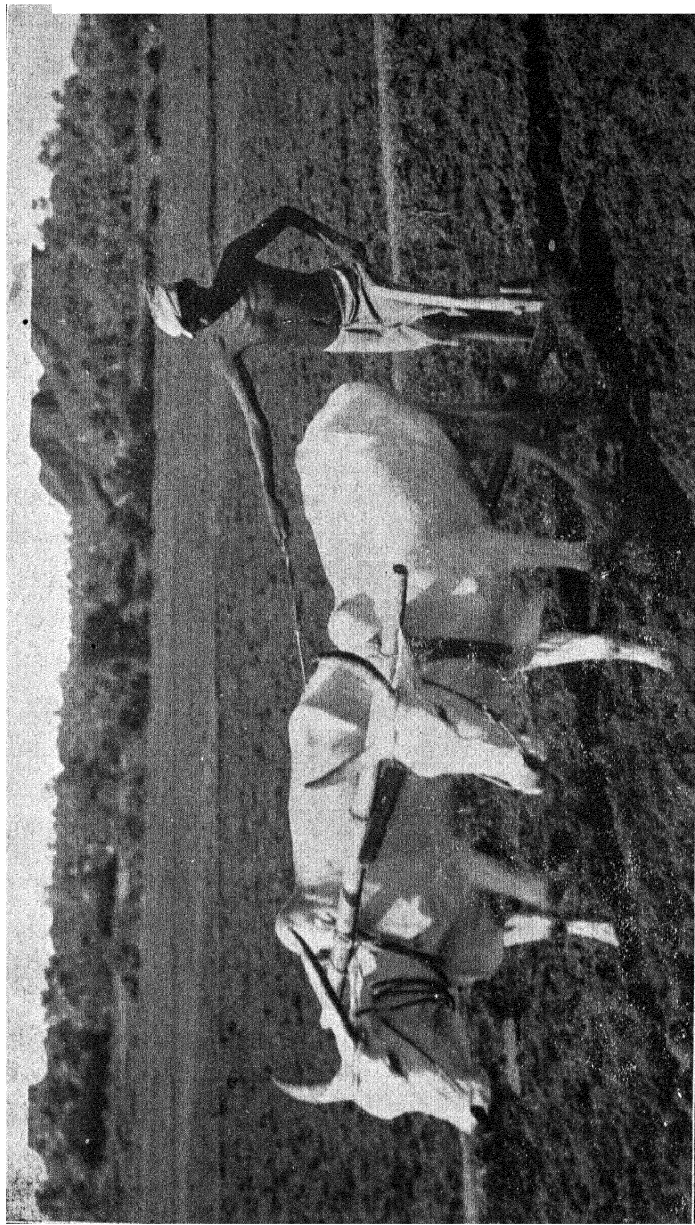
It has been said that social and religious progress has spread or is spreading from the sea inland and not in the reverse direction. This is true of the primitive tribes of Travancore. Along high way communications, the Kānikkār are under more civilizing influences and have adopted a stabler mode of cultivation in the vicinity of Kulathupuzha. In less accessible areas in Neduvangad and Vilavancode, they are less open to foreign influences and more tenacious of their old ways. They are here nomadic agriculturists and their whole energy is consumed in an ever increasing struggle for bare existence. In the uplands, cultivation is migratory. In the lowlands, it is permanent. On the hills, rice is grown on the dry system. The coincidence of the dry system with migratory cultivation is not accidental. This method of cultivation occupies the greater part of their time and leaves hardly any time for the satisfaction of their other needs. The Vishavans, the Muthuvans, the Mannāns, the Ūrālis, the Paliyans, and the Malayarayans are nomadic agriculturists.

The Malapantārams alone are in the hunting stage of civilization. Their simple and monotonous savage economy permits of no concentration of population. The smaller the number, the easier is

the food assured. Primitive man at the outset had no tools, and his hand was the first tool. Gradually, with his hand he learned to make a number of tools to increase his food supply. It is said that the earliest groups were very small. Since most of the food secured was seized and eaten on the spot, it might be supposed that food gathering was an individual enterprise. Professor Karl Bucher calls this first stage in human economy, "the individual search for food." The Malapantārams may be said to be on the borderland of this stage. A very effective bar to progress was caused by the migratory character of the hunting community which depended on the seasonal movements or scarcity of game. Their habitations were of a flimsy and temporary character, the social organization was loose, and the use of the bow and arrow was found among most of the tribes.

### *Migratory Agriculture*

(The migratory habits of the jungle tribes still continue among the Muthuvans, the Mannāns, the Vishavans, the Ūrālis, the Paliyans, and the Kānik-kār.) The Malayarayans and the Ullātans have fixed habitations known as hamlets consisting of a few flimsy huts. The first mentioned tribes (are compelled to change their hamlets owing to the exhaustion of the soil.) (For further advance, it is necessary to learn how to gather abundant subsistence from a given habitat so as to make permanent villages possible. This necessitated some improvement in tools.) It is said that the digging



A Pulaya ploughing the field.





stick is the beginning of agricultural implements, the progenitor of the hoe, the spade, and the plough. The digging stick is still used by the Malapan-tārams, the Vishavaus, and the Malavētans.

### *Terraced Cultivation*

The Muthuvans have also terraced cultivation in the Anjanad Valley. Ward and Conner speak of "numberless little glades, some adapted to rice cultivation, scattered along the hilly table that overlooks the valley, whose inhabitants are never tempted to settle within this space."\* Semple states that a mountain environment often occasions a forced development in the form of agriculture among people who otherwise still linger on the outskirts of civilization. This is true of the Muthuvans who have been in the Anjanad valley from the second century A. D.

The Thantapulayas, Malavētans, the Malankuravans, and the Malapulayas live by the sweat of their brows. Most of the tribes evoke the admiration of the people of the plains by the manner in which they climb trees and collect honey. They also collect minor forest produce and give them to the contractor who supplies them with rice and other articles of food. They also take part in the capture of elephants on the hills.

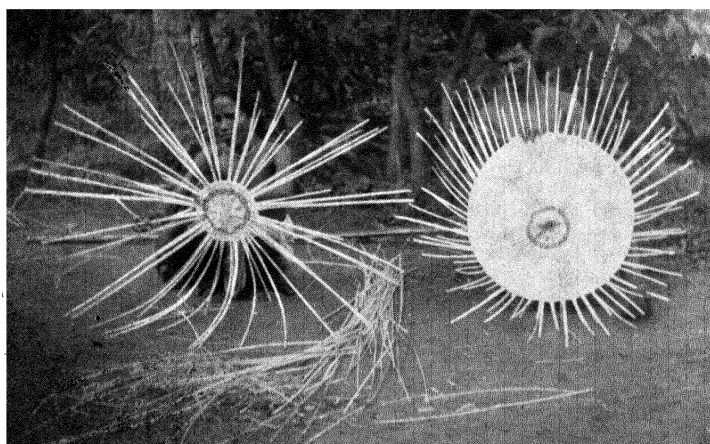
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\* Ward and Conner—Memoirs of the Survey of the Travancore and Cochin States p. 159.

*Effect of Clash of Culture*

The preliterate people of Travancore are found in the recesses of the hills. In spite of their receding into the interior forest, they have been brought into contact with the people of higher culture, firstly on account of improvement of communications and modes of travelling, secondly through the influence of markets, and thirdly through the work of missionaries. Sanitation is badly wanting in the hamlets of the hill-tribes. Some of them bury their dead about a hundred yards from their huts. The wearing of clothes is said to be the worst of all the evil customs introduced by civilization. It has created among them a flesh consciousness and the virtues of concealment, the two sign-posts of civilization. They purchase second hand clothes on the hills and wear them without change until they rot to pieces. The education that is imparted to them undermines superstition and causes their disorganization. It tends to produce idlers and non-producers, and thereby causes economic waste.

One of the causes of deterioration is said to be the advent of modern implements and methods. The improved implements have enabled them to save manual labour in their avocations. The Kānik-kār, the Muthuvans, and others, who have been using a wooden hoe for hoeing the soil and the digging spud for digging up wild tubers and roots, have taken to the use of the axe, the pick-axe and the mammatty.



Paraya Industry.



The Kānikkār and the Muthuvans who were formerly adepts at the use of the bow have now become the proud possessors of fire-arms. Changes have also come about in their food. Coffee is being drunk by the Muthuvans, the Mannāns, and the Kānikkār, while tea is indispensable to the Ūrālis. Changed ways of life and thought have led to the unsettling of the mind of primitive man, and he has bartered away his heritage and retreated to more inhospitable lands to procure fanciful articles. This has changed his former mode of life and deprived him of all incentive for work.

Custom was the unifying factor among the primitive peoples. Contact with the people of the plains has destroyed the complex web of customs and institutions which made up tribal life, and in this process of disintegration, the weaker went to the wall. The control of the hill-tribes by the Forest Department tended to the diminution of the influence and importance of the village chieftains who are only mere shadows of their former selves, and this has endangered the maintenance of discipline. Frequent access to the people of the plains has undermined their clan system and lessened the regard and respect the people had for their headman. The Bachelors' Hall, which used to be a bulwark against malpractices is now dwindling in importance. The custom is still enforced among the Muthuvans, but it is undergoing a slow process of silent decay among other tribes. The habit of toddy and arrack drinking among the Kānikkār, the Muthuvans, and the Mannāns, of opium eating

among the Vishavans, and of ganja smoking among the Paliyans is becoming a serious problem. The improvement of communications has brought them into contact with the dregs of low country men with the result that their morals are badly affected. Lethal diseases like leprosy, syphilis, and others are now found among them. They have lost in bodily vigour and are fast dwindling in number. They have now a low fecundity and fertility. Let us proceed to examine the cause of this further.

### *Population Problem in Travancore*

It has been said that the population of Kerala grows in defiance of the laws of nature, and that a married woman in Travancore will have on an average 7 children born to her during the child bearing period of 15—45 years.\* A study of the figures among the primitive tribes unfolds a different tale.

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\*N. Kunjan Pillai—The Travancore Census Report, 1931-Part I, p. 38.

No.	Name of Tribe.	Where found.	Number of Families.	Average size of Family.	Average Birth Rate.	Average Survival Rate.	Remarks
1	Kanikkār	{ Pechipara	37	3.5	2.7	1.6	2.3
2	Malavētan	{ Kulathupuzha	40	6.3	4.3	3.0	
3	Malankuravan	Rani	...	3.5	3.0	1.5	2.7
4	Malapantāram	Kottarakara	29	4.1	2.7	2.1	
5	Mannān	Achenooil	...	5.8	4.0	3.8	
		{ Periyar	...	7.3	5.3	3.8	
6	Malayarayan	{ Mannankandam	17	4.4	2.4	1.7	2.1
		{ Manimala	36	4.5	2.5	1.5	
7	Muthuvan	{ Thodupuzha	42	5.9	8.9	2.8	2.1
		{ Pooyankutty	25	4.5	4.1	2.5	
8	Paliyan	{ Deviar	25	5.3	3.6	3.2	2.3
9	Malapulayas	Periyar	...	5.5	4.6	2.3	
10	Pulayas	Marayur	21	4.3	4.0	2.3	2.5
11	Ullātan	Pathanapurram	24	4.5	3.8	2.5	
12	Ūrali	Manimala	...	4.0	2.0	1.4	2.6
13	Vishavan	Arakulam	...	5.3	3.2	2.5	
14	Nayādi	Idyara	21	4.3	3.4	2.6	3.0
15	Paraya	Karthigapalli	8	5.0	3.7	3.0	
		Chirayinkil	19	3.1	1.5	1.1	2.5
		Thovala	20	4.2	3.5	2.5	



It will be seen that the average survival rate of children is 1·6 among the Kānikkār of Pechipara, 1·5 among the Malavētan, 1·4 among the Ullātans, and 1·7 among the Malayarayans of Manimala. Owing to improved climatic conditions, the size of the family increases to 3·0 among the Kānikkār of Kulathupuzha, 2·8 among the Malayarayan of Thodupuzha, 3·8 among the Mannāns of Periyar, 3·8 among the Malapantārams. In fact, the average survival-rate goes just over two among the other tribes. Compared with the other castes of the State, the fertility of the primitive tribes is low.

The human species has excessive fecundity, but it is always to the female we look for an increase or decrease in species, for the male has prolific fertilizing power. The reproductive power of the female is governed by several factors. We may first consider the fecund cycle. Evidence from studies of primitive peoples indicates that primitive man has but one reproductive period during the year. This is said to be due to the precarious nature of his food-supply. In Travancore, the Malapantārams are a small tribe in the hunting stage of civilization. They live on such wild, edible roots and fruits as come in their way. They are reduced to semi-starvation at times. At Achencoil, they are found to have an average survival rate of 3·8 which does not betoken that they have only one reproductive period in the year. Conditions no doubt change when man takes to agriculture and domesticating animals. His present perennial sex

life is a concomitant of his emancipation on vegetation, wild fruit, and game. The Muthuvans, the Ūrāli, the Mannān, the Paliyan, the Pulaya, and others have a higher average survival rate, while the Kānikkār of Pechipara, the Malavētan, and the Malayarayan of Manimala have a lower survival rate owing to adverse influence of environment.

The length of fecund life is another factor to be reckoned in this connection. The fecund life for females is from 15 to 45, and for males from puberty to old age. The age at which menstruation occurs appears to be influenced by climate, race, and culture.. According to Engelman, the average age of menstruation is 12·9 years in the tropics. My enquiry shows that it is about 14 years among the primitive tribes of Travancore. Menstruation begins later and ends earlier among the tribes.

It is said that a surplusage of adult females over males is a necessary condition of stabilization and continued vigour of the human races.\* The table given below represents the present state of affairs among the primitive tribes:—

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\* Pitt Rivers—The Clash of Culture and contact of Races p. 268.

S. N.	Name of Tribe.	1911 Census			1921 Census			1931 Census.		
		Males.		Total.	Males.		Total.	Males.		Total.
		Females.			Females.			Females.		
1	Kanikkar	2,166	1,868	4,034	1,967	1,795	3,762	3,525	3,134	6,659
2	Malayarayan	1,294	1,318	2,612	1,486	1,372	2,858	1,606	1,576	3,182
3	Malavetan	2,584	2,267	5,051	4,114	4,125	8,239	5,919	5,818	11,737
4	Cheruvetan	746	740	1,486	655	686	1,321	621	701	1,322
5	Malankuravan	30,637	32,127	62,824	36,946	38,399	75,345	45,949	49,346	95,295
6	Mannan	647	592	1,239	587	511	1,098	605	611	1,276
7	Muthuvan	195	184	379	122	135	257	649	652	1,301
8	Paliyan	...	...	...	155	134	289	266	217	483
9	Malapantaram	59	45	104	34	23	57	110	77	187
10	Ullatan	2,197	1,918	4,115	1,604	1,803	3,407	2,242	2,879	5,121
11	Uräli	169	197	366	129	101	230	454	492	916
12	Vishavan	98	103	201	72	109	181	81	85	166
13	Malapulayan	17	28	45	...	...	...	125	129	254
14	Thantapulaya	...	...	...	...	...	...	386	409	795
15	Pulaya	93,335	91,979	185,314	99,420	96,764	196,184	183,815	181,335	365,150
16	Nayadi	...	...	...	109	73	182	64	80	144

1. Pitt—Rivers—The Clash of Culture and contact of Races—p. 268.

The Muthuvan, the Ūrāli, the Vishavan, the Malapulaya, the Thantapulaya, and the Ullātan have a higher sex-ratio according to the Census of 1931, while the Kānikkār, the Malayarayan, the Malavētan, the Mannān, the Paliyan, the Malapan-tāram, and the Pulaya have a lower sex-ratio.

A surplusage of adult females alone ensures the general monandry of the reproductive females, and is an indication for the preservation of the race. The absence of a high sex-ratio among the latter is a sign of degeneration.

It is however pointed out that the primitive tribes have a higher sex-ratio than the Marumak-kathayis, and the latter a higher ratio than the Makkathayis.\* Among the primitive tribes, the Kuravan is the only tribe having a population of considerable numbers, and they have an excess of females over males. The numbers of the other tribes are too few to justify a general inference being drawn on the sex-ratio. However, the tendency of the tribes, as is seen from the average ratio, is for the females to outnumber the males. The sex-ratio of the important tribes is given below:—

1.. Ullātans	.. 1284
2. Kuravans	.. 1074
3. Thantapulayas	.. 1060
4. Muthuvan	.. 1005
5. Vetāns	.. 983
6. Malayarayan	.. 974
7. Mannān	.. 919
8. Kānikkāran	.. 889

\* Kunjan Pillai, N. The Travancore Census Report, 1931. Vol. I Part 1.—p 132.

Havelock Ellis opines that the sexual impulse in savages is weaker in the intensity and frequency of its manifestations. "It may be that the smallness of the reproductive organs is due to the lack of sexual organs of sexual excitement, and this in turn may be the cause of so much sterility. Carr-Saunders thinks that it is not unreasonable to assume a connection between lesser development of the reproductive organs and a lower degree of fecundity." The Kānikkār of Pechipara, the Ullātans, inside the reserve forests, the Malayarayans, and the Malavētans exhibit low fecundity. Some writers think that females are responsible for this, while others attribute it to the males. Popenoe accounts for sterility being due to spermatoxins, lack of healthy, well-ordered and unsatisfactory marital habits.\*

Lastly, Dr. Rivers speaks of the enormous influence of mind on body arising out of despair among lowly people, and says that it is the basic cause of depopulation. By destruction of interest in life, the hill-tribes are cut off from their old moorings and they become mal-adapted, a circumstance which leads to eventual extinction. Changed conditions of life can be measured in human decrease among the Kānikkār. Where there have been fewer changes (the Muthuvans and the Ūrālis), there the race survives. It is generally observed that sexual desire and vigour tend remarkably to be inhibited by anxiety, depression or the influence of any strong emotional distraction. Ellis says

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\* Duncan, H. G. *Race and Population Problems* p. 265.

that desire and pleasure are very important aids to pre-disposing causes of fertility. Any disturbance in this direction is likely to affect women more profoundly, for a disturbance in the sexual sphere of women is more potent in its influence on the whole organism than in man. Primitive man loses heart, when once his customs are tampered with and when he is likely to be absorbed, this despair serves to aid the physical causes of depopulation. The fecundity and fertility of the tribes are being reduced by the operation of the various causes mentioned above. According to Robert R. Kuezynski, "if a woman has two children, the population will sooner or later decrease."\* Judged by this criterion, all the primitive tribes of Travancore, barring the Muthuvans, the Mannāns, the Paliyans, and the Malapantārams are declining.

### *Remedies of Depopulation*

It is said that the provision of new interests is the antedote against racial despair, but the future must be built on the past. Old institutions and ancient traditions must be maintained as far as possible. Most of the primitive tribes still continue to be nomadic agriculturists driven to more uncongenial lands, which yield hardly enough to run their home for the whole year. Their economic level is still very low. A large number of them have not the means to secure the needed clothing. They are perpetually in debt to low country men which they are seldom able to discharge. "They are the prey of many kinds of

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\* Robert R. Kuezynski--The Balance of Births and Deaths p. 1.

sharks who take advantage of their ignorance.” The Government of Travancore have framed a set of rules for the treatment and management of the hill tribes. If their welfare is to be safe-guarded, the rules now in force require revision. We must build on the tribal past through the agency of the tribes themselves. The attempt to aid and foster them should be the concern of the Government, and should not be delegated to other agencies. The rules have therefore to be modified on the lines evolved by Mac Gregor elsewhere.\*

1. The areas in reserves should be divided in small blocks and assigned to individuals separately, conferring on them the ownership thereof.

2. Each hill-man to whom land is given should pay a fixed rental to Government.

3. Village councils should be constituted for each settlement.

As nomadic agriculture is still the mainstay of the tribes, improvidence and laziness intensify their indebtedness. “Poverty and hunger give a definite felt want. A felt want—a keen feeling of need—is the best basis for securing and holding interest.”† It seems therefore desirable that adequate credit facilities should be created, so that the people may stand on their own legs. Credit

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\* The attention of the reader is invited to Page 239. on “the Primitive Tribes of Travancore” by L. A. Krishna Iyer and N. Kunjan Pillay Vol. I, India, Part III, Ethnographical B—Ethnographic Notes by various Authors by Dr. J. H. Hutton,

† D. Spencer Hatch—Up From Poverty p. 99.

societies, should be organized for the purpose of improving the material condition of the tribes. Well regulated markets create in the minds of sellers and purchasers a feeling of confidence in each other. It would be a great boon to the tribes if proper arrangements could be made for marketing their produce, so that they might obtain proper value for their articles.

Much damage has been caused to primitive peoples by reformers who are ignorant of their life and customs. A knowledge of Anthropology will be a useful handmaid to social reformers and administrators. The province of Assam is said to be the only instance of a provincial administration carried on in the best interests of the primitive population, and this has been possible by the anthropological knowledge and foresight possessed by its talented administrators Dr. Hutton and Mr. Mills. Assam serves as a model to other provincial administrations and Indian States for treatment of backward races. It behoves them to consider the feasibility of having a trained anthropologist in charge of primitive areas. The economic cycle of the primitive area could be observed and economic development fostered and guided in keeping with the cycle. The tribes could be protected from unscrupulous money lenders and landlords by special legislation. The material and moral well-being can thus be fostered in harmony with their tribal past. "Every people, every tribe, however little advanced in its stage of development, represents a psychic type or



pattern. The interests of humanity require that every type should be assisted and educated to its adequate expression and development. No race lives to itself and no race dies to itself. We must lead the backward ones to a full utilization of the opportunities of their environment and a development of their distinctive natural characteristics.”\*

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\* Radhakrishnan, S., *The Hindu View of Life*, pp. 95-96.

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## ABBREVIATIONS OF THE TRIBES

---

K., *for* Kanikkar

M. K., *for* Malankuravan

M. Pant., *for* Malapantaram

M. P., *for* Malapulaya

M. V., *for* Malavetan

M. A., *for* Mala Arayan

M., *for* Mannan

Mut., *for* Muthuvan

P., *for* Paliyan

Pa., *for* Parayan

Pu., *for* Pulayan

U., *for* Ullatan

Ur., *for* Urali

V., *for* Vishavan





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showing Distribution of Stature, Cephalic  
Index and Nasal Index.





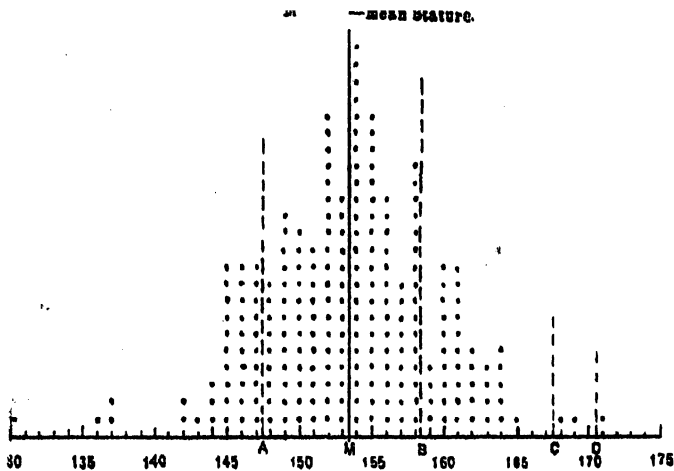


Fig. 1 Kanikkar.

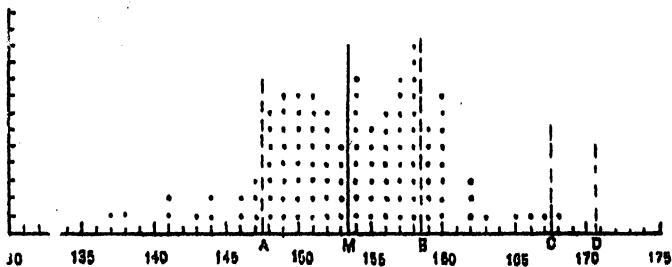


Fig. 2. Malankuravan

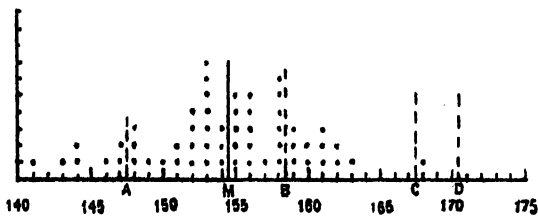


Fig. 3. Malapantaram.



# DISTRIBUTION OF STATURE

Scale 1 Inch=10 cms.

Left of A —Pygmy.

A-B —Short.

B-C —Medium.

C-D —Tall.

M Mean Stature.

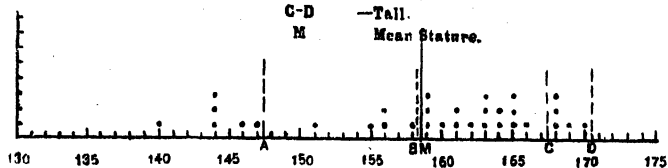


Fig. 4. Malapulayan.

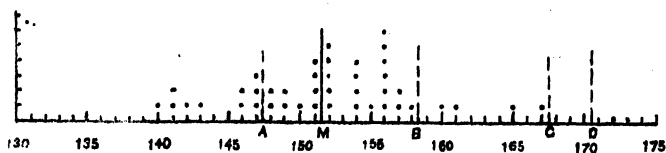


Fig. 5. Mannan.

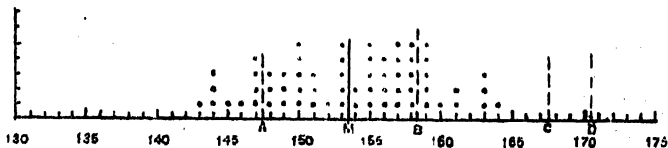


Fig. 6. Malavetan.

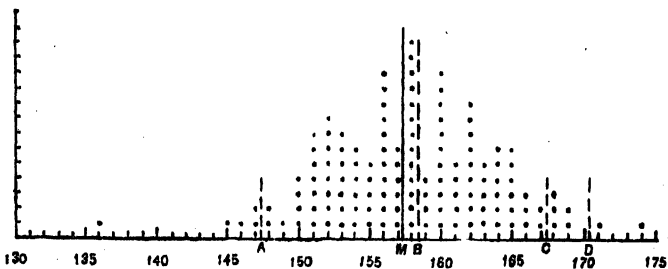


Fig. 7. Malayarayan.



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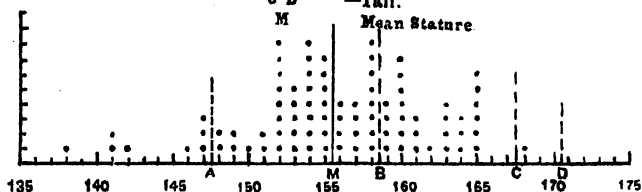


Fig 8. Muthuvan.

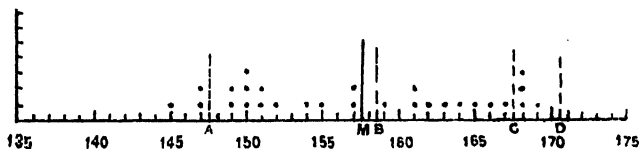


Fig . 9. Paliyan.

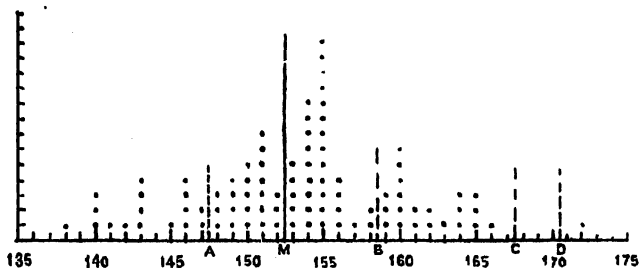


Fig 10. Pulayan

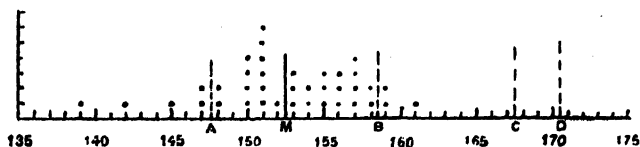


Fig . 11. Thantapulayan.



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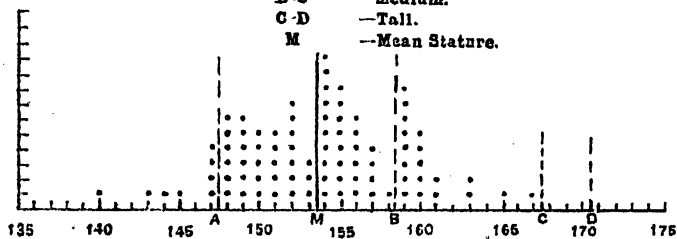


Fig . 12. Ullatan.

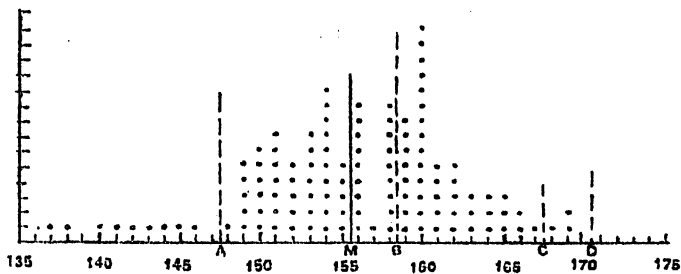


Fig . 13. Urali.

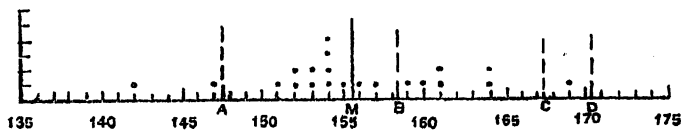


Fig . 14. Vishavan.

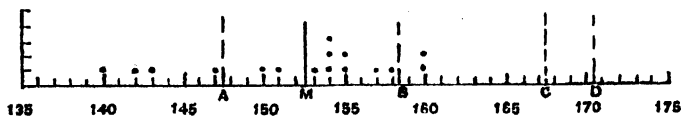


Fig . 15. Nayadi.





# DISTRIBUTION OF STATURE

Scale 1 Inch = 10 cms.

Left of A - Pygmy.

A-B - Short.

B-C - Medium.

C-D - Tall.

M - Mean Stature.

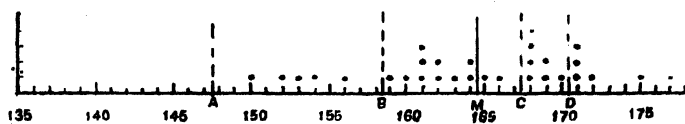


Fig. 16 Sambavar.



Fig 17. Parayan



# DISTRIBUTION of CEPHALIC INDEX

Scale 1 Inch=10 cms.

Left of A —Dolichocephalic.

A-B —Mesocephalic.

Right of B —Brachycephalic.

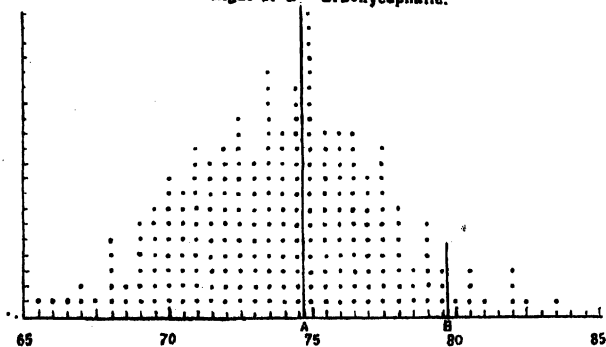


Fig . 1 a . Kanikkar.

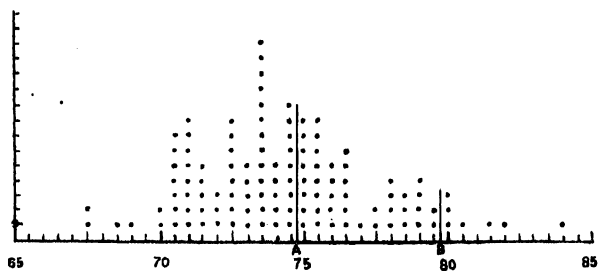


Fig 2 a . Malankuravan.

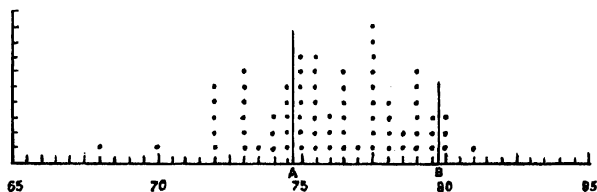


Fig . 3 a . Malapantaram.



# DISTRIBUTION of CEPHALIC INDEX

Scale 1 Inch=10 cms.

Left of A —Dolichocephalic.

A-B —Mesocephalic.

Right of B —Brachycephalic.

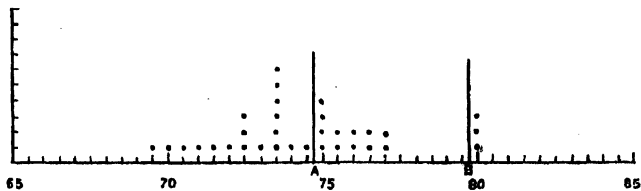


Fig . 4 a . Malapulayan.

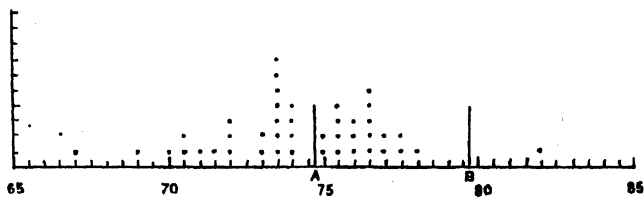


Fig . 5 a . Mannan.

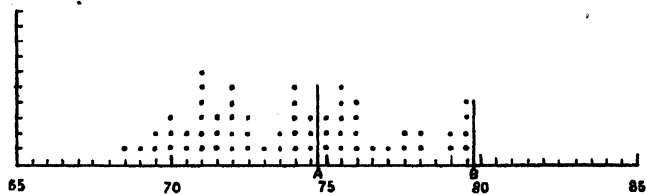


Fig . 6 a . Malavetan.



# DISTRIBUTION of CEPHALIC INDEX

Scale 1 Inch=10 cms.

Left of A —Dolichocephalic.

A-B —Mesocephalic.

Right of B —Brachycephalic.

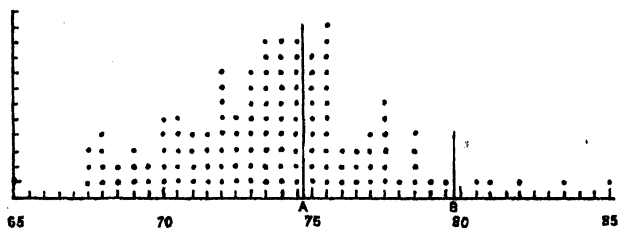


Fig. 7 a. Malayarayan.

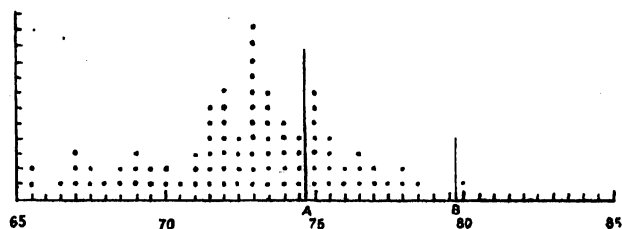


Fig. 8 a. Muthuvan.

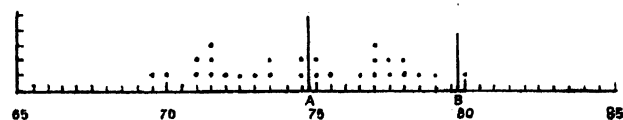


Fig. 9 a. Paliyan.





# DISTRIBUTION of CEPHALIC INDEX

Scale 1 Inch=10 cms.

Left of A —Dolichocephalic.

A-B —Mesocephalic.

Right of B —Brachycephalic.

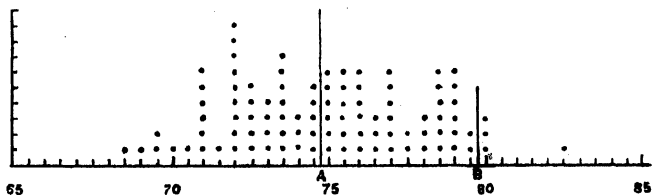


Fig . 10 a. Pulayan.

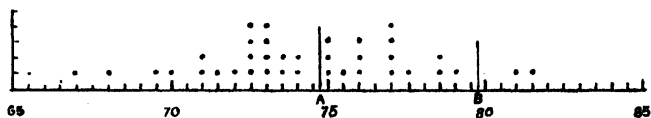


Fig . 11 a. Thantapulayan.

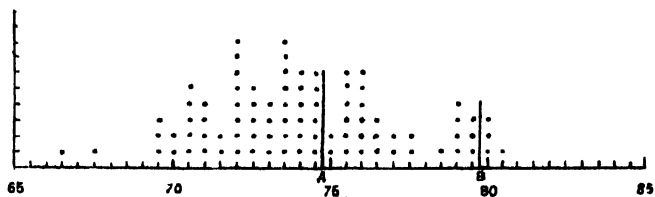


Fig . 12 a. Ullatan.



# DISTRIBUTION of CEPHALIC INDEX

Scale 1 Inch = 10 cms.

Left of A — Dolichocephalic.

A-B — Mesocephalic.

Right of B — Brachycephalic.

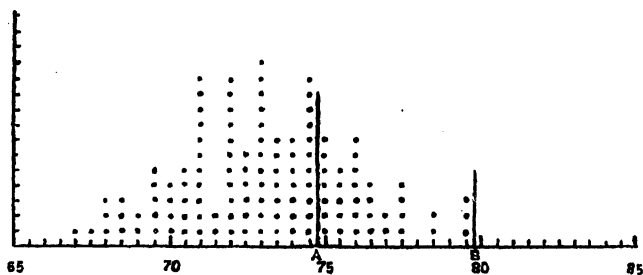


Fig. 13 a. Urali.

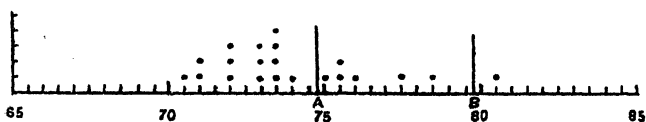


Fig. 14 a. Vishavan.

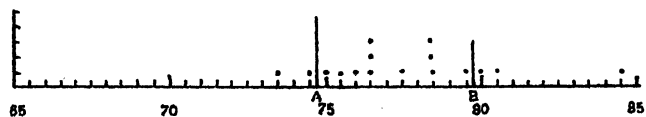


Fig. 15 a. Nayadi.



# DISTRIBUTION of CEPHALIC INDEX

Scale 1 Inch = 10 cms

Left of A — Dolichocephalic.

A-B — Mesocephalic.

Right of B — Brachycephalic

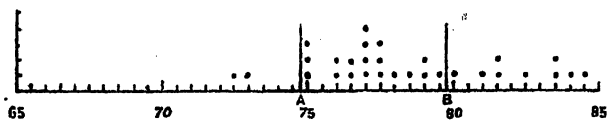


Fig . 16 a. Sambavar.



Fig . 17 a. Paraya.



# DISTRIBUTION of NASAL INDEX

Scale 1 Inch=10 cms.

Left of A —Leptorhine.

A-B —Mesorhine.

Right of B —Platyrrhine.

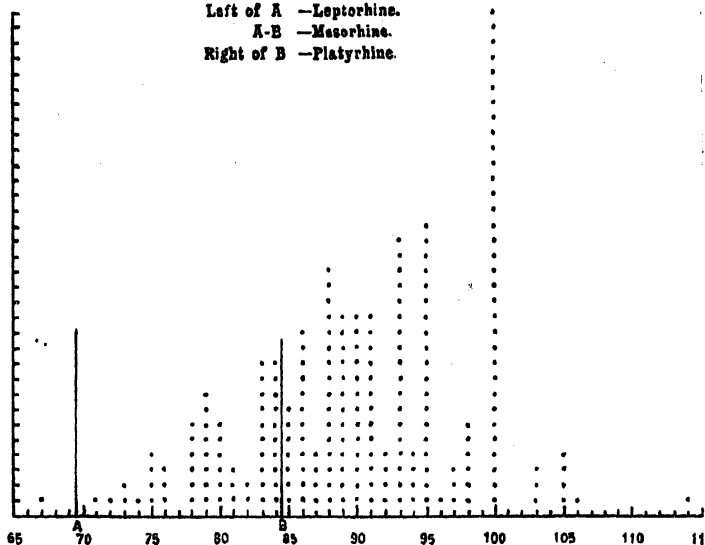


Fig. 1 b. Kanikkar.

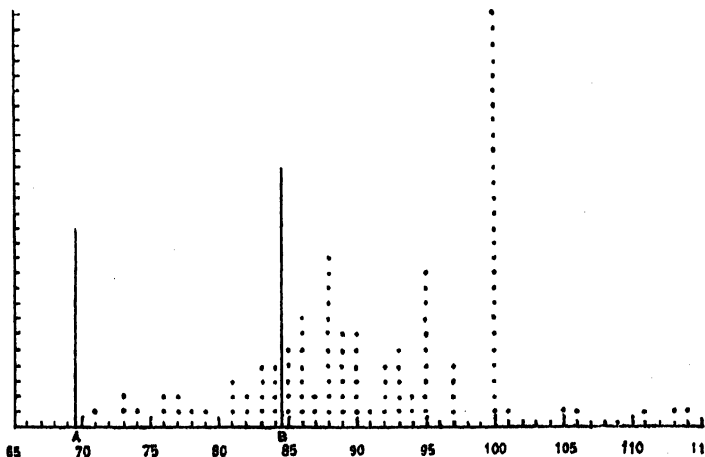


Fig. 2 b. Malankuravan.





# DISTRIBUTION OF NASAL INDEX

Scale 1 Inch=10 cms.

Left of A —Leptorhine.

A-B —Mesorhine.

Right of B —Platyrrhine.

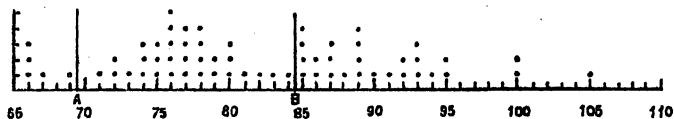


Fig . 3 b . Malapantaram.

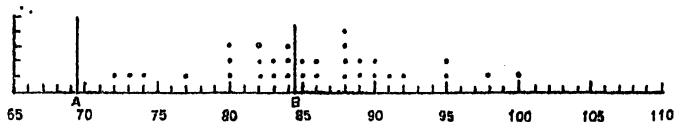


Fig . 4 b . Malapulayan.

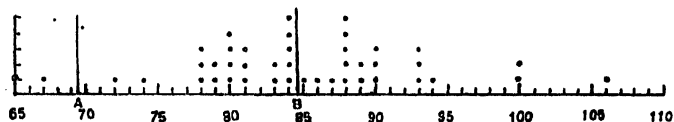


Fig . 5 b . Mannan.

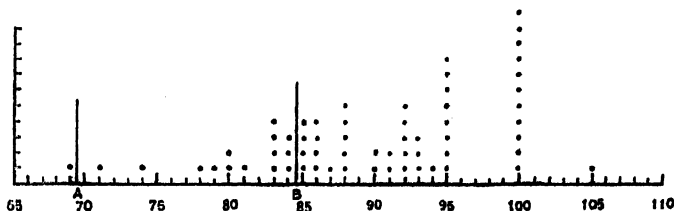


Fig . 6 b . Malavetan.



# DISTRIBUTION OF NASAL INDEX

Scale 1 Inch=10 cms.  
 Left of A —Leptorhine.  
 A-B —Mesorhine.  
 Right of B —Platyrrhine.

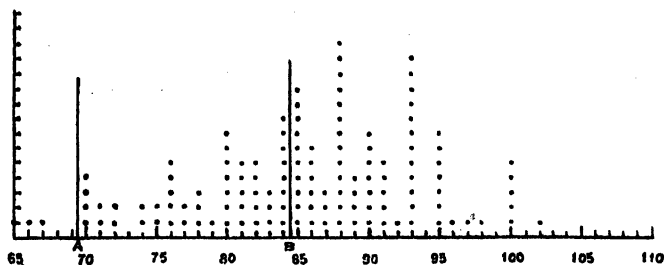


Fig. 7 b. Malayarayan.

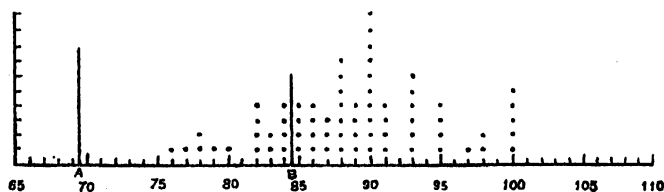


Fig. 8 b. Muthuvan.

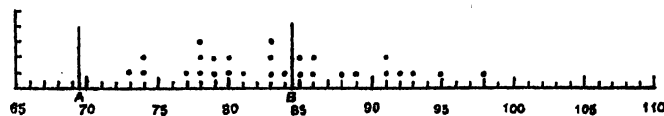


Fig. 9 b. Paliyan.

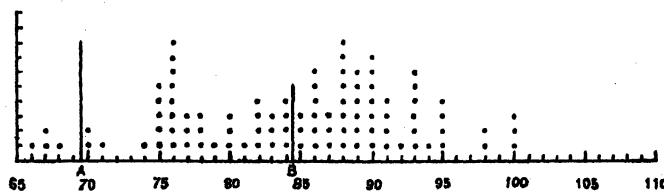


Fig. 10 b. Pulayan.



# DISTRIBUTION of NASAL INDEX

Scale 1 Inch=10 cms.

Left of A —Leptorhine.

A-B —Mesorhine.

Right of B —Platyrrhine

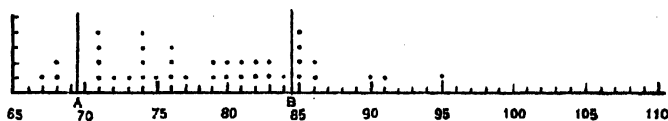


Fig. 11 b. Thantapulayan.

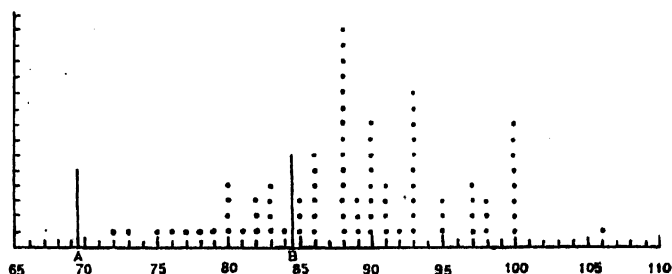


Fig. 12 b. Ullatan.

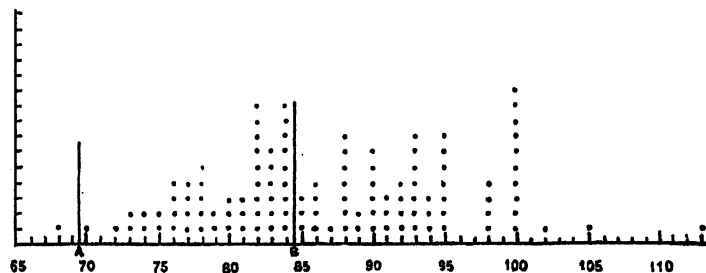


Fig. 13 b Urali.



# DISTRIBUTION of NASAL INDEX

Scale 1 Inch = 10 cms.

Left of A - Leptorhine.

A-B - Mesorhine.

Right of B - Platyrrhine.

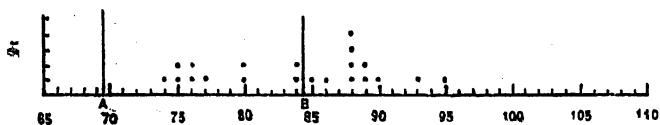


Fig. 14 b. Vishavan.

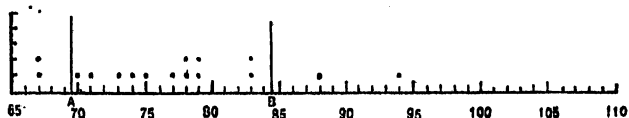


Fig. 15 b. Nayadi.

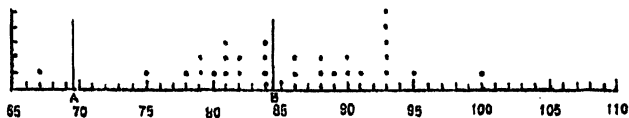


Fig. 16 b. Sambavar.

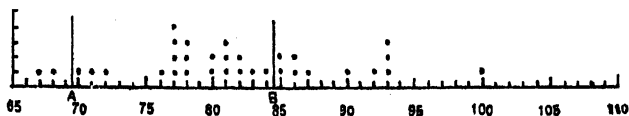


Fig. 17 b. Paraya.







